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ABSTRACT

This volume enlarges upon questions concerning censorship and self-censorship and provides case studies as well as theoretical reflection on the relationship between new technology and media freedom. The seven essays included in this collection deal with two central contemporary problems of the mass media--freedom and democracy. The papers are: "Exit the Censor, Enter the Regulator" (Leonard R. Sussman); "Impact of New Information and Communication Technologies on Information Diversity in North America and Western Europe" (Nicholas Garnham); "The Impact of Electronic Mass Media in Sweden" (Charly Hulten); "Video-Cassette Recorders in Ghana: Impact on Press Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa" (S. T. Kwame Boafo); "New Communication Technologies and Information Freedom in Latin America" (Rafael Roncagliolo); "New Communication Technologies and Press Freedom: A Chilean Case Study" (Fernando Reyes Matta); and "The Media as Fourth Estate: A Survey of Journalism Educators' Views" (Colin Sparks and Slavko Splichal). The first three papers are concerned with the larger picture and the larger media; the second three are concerned with the "marginal" rather than the dominant media; and the final paper deals with some of the problems of the media and democracy in terms of their staff and resources. (TMK)

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No. 106

New Communication Technologies: a Challenge for Press Freedom

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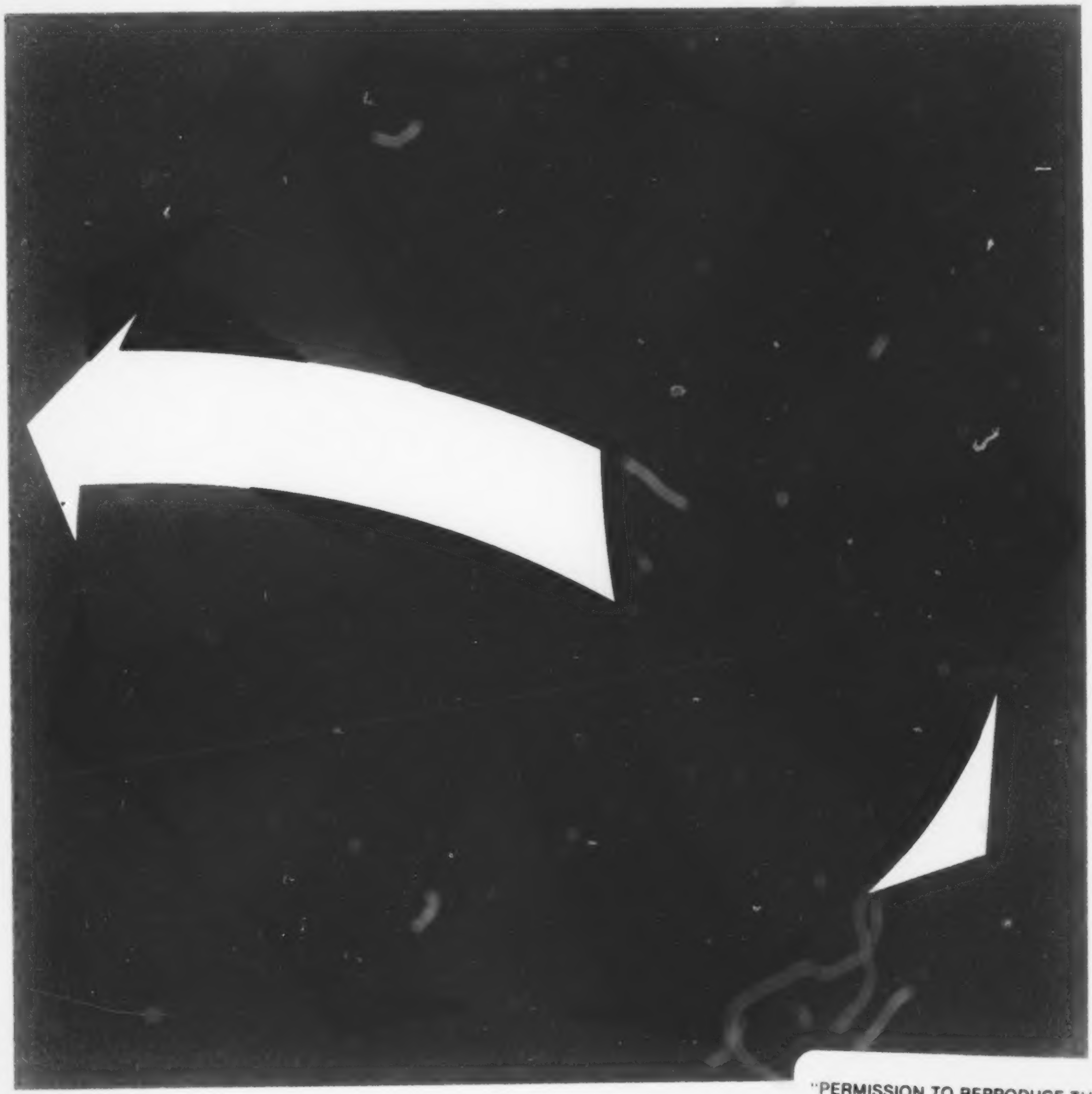

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No. 106

New Communication Technologies: a Challenge for Press Freedom

Edited by Colin Sparks,
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Preface

Press freedom, media independence and information pluralism are among the concerns most strongly highlighted by UNESCO's Third Medium-Term Plan for 1990–1995. When it was adopted by the twenty-fifth session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 1989, the objective of the Medium-Term Plan's communication programme was summarized as follows:

> To render more operational the concern of the Organization to ensure a free flow of information at international as well as national levels, and its wider and better balanced dissemination, without any obstacle to the freedom of expression, and to strengthen communication capacities in the developing countries, so that they may participate more actively in the communication process.

In practical terms, this new focus was put to the test early in 1990 when UNESCO, reacting promptly to developments in Eastern Europe, organized an informal meeting grouping journalists and editors from Eastern and Western Europe to discuss how independent media could be assisted in the East. The follow-up to that meeting featured such areas as technology transfer, professional training and advice on legislation. A year later, early in 1991, UNESCO and the United Nations together took the initiative in holding a seminar at Windhoek, Namibia, to promote an independent and pluralistic African press: that occasion also led to the design and implementation of new programmes to assist emerging independent media.

In the same vein, collaboration with organizations monitoring press freedom developments around the world was intensified, and assistance offered to groups such as Article 19, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Index on Censorship, and 'Reporters sans Frontières' in support of their reporting and co-ordinating functions.

But the practice of media freedom needs a firm theoretical base, and the Third Medium-Term Plan also called for studies on 'the impact of new communication technologies on information pluralism and media practice'. It is the outcome of these studies that is reflected in this issue of the *Reports and Papers on Mass Communication* (RPMC) series.

The volume enlarges upon a number of the questions concerning censorship and self-censorship already tackled in *The Vigilant Press* (RPMC, No. 103), and provides case-studies as well as theoretical reflection on the relationship between new technology and media freedom. The new communication technologies, themselves the subject of a recent issue in this series entitled *New Communication Technologies: Research Trends* (RPMC, No. 105), have revived and sharpened interest in a perennial problem, i.e. whether the new technologies increase freedom and choice or, on the contrary, facilitate control and conformity.

The work has been edited by Dr Colin Sparks, Professor at the Polytechnic of Central London and an editor of *Media, Culture and Society*, a leading communication journal. He has also co-authored the survey in the present work of the contribution of journalism training to ways in which the media can help prevent abuses of power. This 'watchdog' role of the press, as it is sometimes termed, was an equally important aspect of *The Vigilant Press*, and this international curriculum survey supplements the case-studies presented in that issue.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UNESCO.

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Introduction

This collection of essays deals with two of the central contemporary problems of the mass media: freedom and democracy. A series of changes, technological, economic and political, have begun to transform the rigid structures of the post-1945 world. While there have already been very dramatic changes in some parts of the world, it would be foolish to imagine that any of these processes is at an end. The present essays, therefore, are not simply a reflection on a situation in which a new stability, or stasis, has been achieved. They are, rather, commentaries on an evolution that is taking place along a number of axes and whose outcome is still highly uncertain. That uncertainty is reflected in the different foci chosen, and conclusions drawn, by the different writers.

The disparate material collected here can be organized in a number of different ways, but perhaps the most satisfactory is to divide it into three separate categories. In the first of these we have the articles by Sussman, Garnham and Hultén. All of these three articles are concerned with the larger picture and the larger media. Sussman takes a global sweep in his reflections on the immediate past and his prognostications for the near future. His views may be considered 'optimistic' in that his underlying theme is that the development of new communication technologies is leading more or less inevitably to an increase in 'information freedom'.

Garnham takes a rather different line, looking more sceptically at the ways in which the actual implementation of technical advances is embedded in quite powerful and enduring economic and social structures. In this context, there is a need to specify exactly what is meant by 'freedom' in the context of the development of communication technology, since it is not entirely clear that an increase in 'freedom' at one level, say the freedom of all citizens to control the commercial transactions to which their names and addresses are subjected, is compatible with the freedom of those companies whose business it is to compile and sell lists of potential consumers of products and services. One example of this is the development of information technology that has produced both the fax machine, with its acknowledged potential for increasingly unrestricted communication, and the torrent of 'junk fax' that can obstruct the exercise of that communication freedom.

Hultén takes a slightly different, and more modest, approach to the question of the impact of new technologies. His report runs counter to much received wisdom in that it shows, in the Swedish case at least, that there is little substance to the claims for an immediate transformation of social life, or at least of leisure pursuits, as the consequence of the introduction of new technologies. The report certainly records changes in habits and in tastes, but it may surprise the more messianic proponents of technological change to learn how long-term the processes actually are and how resilient a number of 'low technology' leisure pursuits have proved to be.

The second main group of articles is concerned with the impact of information technology in the developing countries. All three of the authors here are more concerned with the 'marginal' rather than the dominant media. Kwame Boafo shows how the introduction of the video cassette recorder in Ghana, both as a domestic leisure item and as a vehicle for public performances, has tended to undermine the rather strict control of the mass media exercised as a rule by the government. In doing so, he presents a hopeful picture of the potential of a new technology to increase the degree of choice exercised by the population. On the other hand, he raises, but does not resolve, what we might hesitantly call the problem of 'legitimate censorship' — namely, how to handle the difficulties posed by representations that are racist, sexist or otherwise offensive. This subject is all the more acutely present in view of the very 'uncontrollability' of video, and has led to intense debate in many countries.

One of the obvious arguments against the claim that video increases 'choice' is that the economics of the production of commercial video severely limit the range of choice and that a wider range of different programmes is often available from state-subsidized broadcasters than from video stores — whether operating legitimately or trading in pirated material. Rafael Roncagliolo provides a stimulating new insight into this debate in his account of the development of popular and alternative video in Latin America. This site of new production, and its increasing success in finding an audience even in broadcast channels, is one of the more interesting factors in the well-known shift of Latin American critical thinking away from the 'national' and towards the 'popular'.

This shift is part of the welcome return of democratic forms to political life in Latin America which is the starting point of Fernando Reyes Matta's article. For nearly a generation, Chile has been a *cause célèbre* of democratic politics and this careful account of the ways in which the technological innovation has been part of the strategies both of the military government and of its opponents is an interesting insight into the real workings of new technology in a concrete social and political setting. However, one focus that Reyes Matta does identify has to do, not with hardware or software, but with 'liveware': the introduction of new technology had an impact upon the journalists who are the main channels of public communication. He finds that the conjunction of technological and political change poses particular problems both for the practice of journalism and for the training of journalists.

The final article in our collection deals with some of the problems of the media and democracy in terms of their staff and resources. It is a report of a survey of the attitudes of journalism educators towards the idea of the media as 'Fourth Estate'. Sparks and Splichal identify this conception as being central to theories of the role of the mass media in the maintenance of a democratic society. The respondents to their survey overwhelmingly consider that this is one role of the media in their country and they incorporate teaching about it into their courses. There is, however, less unanimity as to the nature of this role and about its actual importance. While the respondents are in general remarkably optimistic about the state of the media in their country, they tend to have a rather 'old-fashioned' view as to which media — national television and/or the national daily press — are central to this activity. The development of new communication technologies does not necessarily render older forms obsolete.

The reading public, and more particularly the world of the press, is certainly aware of the enormous changes that have been under way in the Soviet Union in the past few years. The contribution that UNESCO initially planned to obtain from that part of the world has now appeared independently in book form under the title *The Media Under Gorbachev* by Georgii Vadjnadze, published in French by Editions de l'Espace Européen, with an English edition to follow in due course.

One final word: a number of these articles were finalized before the dramatic changes of 1989. They therefore provide a less complete picture of current reality than might otherwise be hoped; such is, to some extent, the inexorable fate of scholarly publications in an epoch of rapid change. On the other hand there is a surprising sense in which the underlying themes with which they are concerned have endured, and indeed been strengthened by those events. Concern with freedom and democracy was, and is, perhaps most clearly felt in countries such as those of Eastern Europe, China and South Africa, but there is nowhere we can point to as an ideal situation to which others might aspire. These articles show just how people are trying to improve their situation through technological changes. Such problems are found everywhere.

Colin Sparks

Exit the censor, enter the regulator

Leonard R. Sussman

Introduction

Despite the revolutions of 1989, some eighty-two different kinds of censorship are still practised worldwide. Censorship takes many forms, from murdering journalists to putting highly sophisticated forms of pressure on reporters and media managers. Altogether, systematic pressures induce a high degree of self-censorship which is harder to detect than outright blue-pencilling of articles before publication or broadcasting. Censors operate more or less openly, depending on the degree of outright centralizing of government and of state control over mass communications. The revolutions of 1989 in Central Europe demonstrated the intimate connection between the systems of governance and the uses of mass communication for retaining or — as we saw that year — undermining highly centralized governments and societies.

Those revolutions, we shall maintain, were prepared, and masses of people mobilized, by careful employment of the instruments of modern communication. It is too early to predict how the new governments and societies will develop. It seems probable, however, that they will rely increasingly on the new communications technologies to provide a diversity of ideas and objectives. Such pluralism suggests a movement toward the political democratization of these countries.

It is the further premise of the writer that these new communications technologies will increasingly influence all countries, no matter how centralized their present form of governance. This suggests that there will be many more political revolutions across the planet attributable in large measure to the new communications technologies. Changes will occur within each nation, large or small, rich or poor, of whatever present political and social orientation. These changes, moreover, will not be wrought in isolation. The new communications technologies will be most productive when they are joined together in a tissue of networks, both domestic and international. This will be known as the Integrated System of Digital Networks (ISDN).

ISDN, like the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions before it, will not automatically enlist peoples or nations. Technology in itself cannot create new polities, but new communications technologies will become essential to economic and social development. Consequently, they will drive politics and speed up democratization. Political will is still needed to ensure such development and avoid the disadvantages of the new technologies; in brief, to avoid the recentralization of political systems through the misuse or exploitation of the networking aspects of ISDN.

To skirt that negative possibility a new set of regulatory rules will be needed nationally and internationally. The great challenge in the thirty years ahead will be the creation of regulatory systems founded on democratic objectives — equitable for all citizens within countries; and for all countries, large or small, rich or poor. Regulators would replace censors in order to maintain pluralistic news and information systems within and between countries.

Press freedom as a human right

In the 1980s, from the Pacific rim to the tip of South America, and across Asia and Eastern Europe to southern Africa, peoples rose — usually though not always successfully — to alter restrictive systems of governance of the political right and left. This was the decade when concern for human rights moved from the forums of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (the Helsinki Accords) to the streets where citizens massed and, without threatening violence, sought to bring an end to deprivations of human rights.

One primary right they demanded, in addition to political and civil liberties, was the freedom to know and to express diverse ideas: the right to be served by news and information media that are independent of the government yet have access to all but the most sensitive official information, and to a wide variety of nongovernmental sources as well. Each of the successful revolutions of 1989, as well as the unsuccessful attempt in Tiananmen Square, China, called for freedom of the news and information systems as being essential to political and civil liberties. The press (print, broadcast and electronic) is, indeed, the vehicle which conveys news and interpretation and enables citizens to evaluate and respond to both. Press freedom, as the 1980s dramatically demonstrated, is a human right.

The key to press freedom is the institutionalized commitment of government to permit the flow of ideas without prior or post influence or control by officials of the state. The hallmark of such an independent flow is diversity of news and information. This pluralism of ideas, including dissent from official policies, is fundamental. There is no single 'truth'. Through the ages, however, the nobility, religious leaders and secular officials have insisted otherwise. Today, in an increasingly complex world, proclaimers of a single truth in politics, economics, science or commerce are destined to be disputed by other authorities and, as the 1980s showed, by events. Judge Learned Hand put it well in the United States context a generation ago: 'Right conclusions are more likely to be gathered out of the multitude of tongues than through any kind of authoritative selection.'

If no one government, corporate entity or individual is the embodiment of the truth, some or all of these may discern or express some truth; several, assessing different aspects of an event or development, may approximate truth. Consequently, pluralism in the channels of news and information, and diversity in the reportage and expression of viewpoints, are essential to the maximizing of press freedom and its concomitants, i.e. political and civil liberties.

The news media serve more than their obvious informational function. At their best, the media are also the balance wheel of society's power structure. In every country, the state is the most pervasive power, even if that power is limited by complex constitutional constraints. In market economies, corporate and financial entities share power or compete with state power. The news and information media, whether independent or allied with either or both state or commercial power centres, are a third source of influence and power. The media, if not owned or controlled by the state, are the object of official interest and concern. All states, from the most restrictive to the most benignly democratic, seek to 'manage the news'. Democratic societies have constitutional commitments which — except for punishing libel, discouraging pornography and protecting the most sensitive security secrets — preclude state censorship. No legislative enactment or judicial decision, however, can eliminate sly efforts by officials in even the most democratic countries to promote their policies and fend off embarrassing criticism. To assure access to all but classified government files, the United States and several other governments have enacted Freedom of Information Acts (FOIA). FOIA is the latest assurance for the citizen that the several power centres are kept somewhat in balance — an objective requiring manifold channels of information and diversity of ideas. For just as nature abhors a vacuum, so political freedom rejects a monopoly of information, whether attempted by governmental or nongovernmental managers.

Reporting and distorting

A survey conducted by this writer for Freedom House in 1987-88 examined state versus information power in seventy-four countries.[1] The survey sought to discover how news was reported and distorted in thirty-six of the most-free nations and thirty-eight of the least-free. The degree of freedom was assessed by weighing some two dozen criteria kept free of ideological, political or cultural biases. Altogether the 3,563 million people in these countries closely reflected the political and geographic composition of the whole world's nations and populations. Journalists and academics were the respondents in the survey. Although the events of 1989 have eliminated several regimes with harsh press controls, several other countries with more liberal information policies in 1988 have since retrogressed. To be sure, there has been significant improvement overall in Eastern Europe, but the thrust of the survey's findings is little changed. These were:

1. *Political* pressures influence newspapers everywhere. Such influences are felt strongly in nearly a third of the most-free nations and twice as strongly in the least-free.

2. Strong *commercial* pressures on the press, surprisingly, occur only half as frequently as political influences in the most-free countries. And, no less surprisingly, commercial and ideological influences on the print press are twice as strong in the least-free as in the most-free nations.

3. When all pressures are examined, strong *editorial control* is exerted by print journalists in 68 per cent of the most-free places, whereas broadcast journalists maintain full control in only 44 per cent of the most-free nations.

4. More than one-third of the least-free countries strongly control news content by limiting access to newsprint and broadcast materials.

5. *Licensing* of publications and journalists strongly influences the content of news reporting in nearly half of the least-free countries.

6. Even in a quarter of the most-free states, however, restrictive laws of many kinds influence newspaper and magazine content. In three-quarters of the least-free nations, such laws affect news reporting.

7. Newspaper journalists regarded by governments as unfriendly are penalized to some extent in 18 per cent of the most-free countries, and in two-thirds of the least-free nations. Unfriendly broadcasters are penalized in 95 per cent of the least-free nations.

8. Significantly, more than half the most-free countries *partially limit* access to news in order to control the information flow. This is the case in nearly all the least-free nations. About two-thirds of the latter also strongly engage in the practice of providing newspapers with information known to be false.

9. *Denunciation* of journalists to destroy their credibility or cost them their jobs is practised by upward of 80 per cent of the least-free governments.

10. Private ownership of the news media and market competition do more to inhibit the free flow of news in the least-free than in the most-free.

11. The harshest measures — murder, imprisonment, harassment, banning, confiscation — are endemic in the least-free countries. Murdering journalists, we were told, however, has less influence on the content of the press than frequent arrest or harassment.

The moral seems clear: wielders of political or economic power seek still greater power in every society, irrespective of social or political structure, but great qualitative distinctions are nevertheless apparent between citizen-*freedoms* in the most-free states and citizen-*controls* in the least-free.

I have tabulated eighty-two different methods employed by governments and their political associates or antagonists to victimize journalists in order to influence or control the flow of information. The main forms of attack are described below.

Physical assaults on journalists. These take many forms: (1) assassination of journalists by government or party-associated death squads; (2) 'disappearance' of newspersons as in Argentina before 1983 where 82 journalists were forever 'desaparecidos'; (3) kidnapping of reporters, maltreatment in captivity and public beatings; this is sometimes accompanied by threats of similar treatment of still-practising journalists; (4) in warfare or insurgencies, journalists may be treated as traitors if they cover one side and attempt to report from the other; (5) or they may be victims of ambush or bombing.

Physical attacks on the media. Print or broadcast plants may be raided, burned or occupied by mobs, equipment impounded or water and electricity cut off.

Psychological assaults on journalists or the media. They may be threatened with physical harm or the loss of a job, or detained without a charge. Alternatively, their plants may be threatened with closure or management faced with imprisonment or expulsion from the country's leadership circle.

Editorial control. There are many versions of this: (1) the government operates an official news agency that fixes the content and tone of domestic news coverage and provides government-edited versions of incoming world news; (2) officials set guidelines mandating areas of coverage and dictate the slant and 'responsibilities' of the news media in order to advance political, economic, developmental, social or other objectives; (3) authorities show favouritism in controlling access to official news through leaks so as to control the 'spin' and thereby influence coverage; (4) government schools train domestic journalists and restrict the residence, movement and access of foreign journalists; (5) the Information Ministry releases news and information, thereby determining the volume and content; (6) secrecy is invoked in order to restrict embarrassing information; or (7) certain editions or even entire publications are confiscated.

Legal action. Official censorship is on the wane as an overt restriction enforced by censors. Far more subtle measures, as described above and below, strike greater fear in journalists, and generate more self-censorship: (1) there are myriad laws penalizing journalists and their media, i.e. 'abuse of publishing', contempt, security, confidentiality, official secrets, arms control, anti-terrorism, anti-protest, military codes, anti-communism, defense of socialism, defense of the revolution, demeaning the president or his family; (2) there are contempt citations, forced corrections and retractions, charges of criminal libel, licensing of journalists and threat to withdraw licenses, monitoring reporting against a code of practice, imprisonment, detention, banning, expulsion from journalism (or, in the case of foreign journalists, from the country), denial of access to geographic or sensitive areas, and the demand to reveal sources of information; (3) for foreign reporters, surveillance or denial of a satellite feed; or (4) the news media may be suspended, banned, facilities or products confiscated, plants nationalized, the ruling party given ownership, opposition-party papers banned, or offices searched for documents.

Financial action. The possibilities here are innumerable: (1) newspersons may be bribed by officials or threatened with loss of career; (2) prices or allocations of newsprint or broadcast facilities may be controlled by government; (3) circulation and distribution may be limited as assigned by officials; (4) prices of an independent publication may be determined by government; (5) foreign exchange needed to purchase newsprint or equipment for independent media may be controlled by officials; (6) subsidies or loans may be given to favoured media and government advertising placed in favoured journals; (7) tax rate may be adjusted to favour or harm the press, or (8) subscriptions to favoured publications may be purchased by government agencies for distribution at home and abroad.

As a consequence of these and other restraints on the independent news and information media, journalists and their managements tend to censor their reports and commentaries to avoid government intervention. This tendency, in turn, leads to the muzzling of journalists by editors and managers, the creation of government media councils to engage journalists in institutionalized self-censorship, and financial dependence on government by already weakened independent media.

Though not all such consequences are statistically verifiable, many cases of censorship — physical, psychological, economic and other assaults on the news and information media — can, indeed, be quantified. This writer has recorded such data for eight years. [2] In 1989 seventy-three journalists were killed on the job in twenty-four countries. More than half the murdered newspersons were killed in Latin America — half of these by guerrillas and half by drug traffickers. When terrorism targets the press it not only kills journalists. It casts a pall of self-censorship and despair over the whole society. Another thirty-eight were kidnapped or 'disappeared'. Some 354 were arrested or detained. One hundred and thirty were wounded, beaten or otherwise assaulted. Death threats or similar warnings were received by fifty-one journalists. Another 189 were harassed in various ways. Attacks on newspaper plants and broadcasting stations resulted in the closure of thirty-eight media facilities, while twenty-two were bombed or burned and ten occupied; there were eighty-one cases of news media bannings. More than a thousand cases of harassment of journalists were recorded in 1989.

Centralized governance

Highly centralized state power hinders the sharing of information that may generate political dissent. Almost any information may be useful to opponents of the regime. The recent history of Sudan demonstrates the fate of the information media in the creation and destruction of a democracy. A weak centralized government established a democratic system in May 1986. Prime Minister Sadiq El Mahdi promised to permit a wide range of press freedom as well as parliamentary democracy. In a new use of mass communication, television cameras were placed in parliament to enable citizens to watch legislators in action. The *Sudan Times*, an independent daily newspaper edited by Bona Malwal, tested free journalism as no other paper in sub-Saharan Africa had done before. With a war in progress, for example, Malwal headlined one article, 'Is there dissent within the Sudanese army?' He described the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as being 'increasingly irrelevant'.

The Prime Minister and his officials attacked the *Times* more and more. The editor responded (4 July 1988):

> The *Sudan Times* realises that it is in a fortunate position. We have, so far, been allowed complete freedom enjoyed by very few countries on the African continent. The government certainly deserves praise for the maintenance of that freedom; it cannot have been easy to practise such restraint during the turbulent times we have recently experienced. But it must be stressed that freedom of speech and freedom of the press are fundamental to a system which claims, as ours does, to be a multi-party democracy; such freedoms are not privileges but rights. Anyone who interferes with these rights, whatever their motives may be, threatens the whole system with serious and permanent damage. If the press is restricted by government we will find ourselves on the slippery slope to authoritarianism.

As government pressures on the independent media increased, the content of the state-run radio and television became less diversified and more linked to official policies and personalities. The *Times* warned (18 November 1988):

> The state media must be freed from the fetters of governmenst which see no role for it beyond entertainment and slavish obedience to its policies. The democratic claims of this government will always be suspect as long as the state media serve up a steady diet of pap...

The 'slippery slope to authoritarianism' was reached on 30 June 1989. The military ousted the civilian government, shut down all the newspapers and employed radio and television as the only channel of mass communication. Independent information systems, though limited in power, were crushed.

Decentralized governance

The decentralized governmental system of South Africa has demonstrated no less fear of independent journalism. Pretoria, however, constructs elaborate legislative and administrative restrictions which, despite the semblance of a relatively free press, institutionalize massive self-censorship throughout South African journalism. The country has long called its journalists the freest in Africa. The sophisticated system of laws sustaining apartheid has not been substantively altered despite the liberalizing rhetoric of a new Prime Minister and the elimination of some 'petty apartheid' restrictions on the majority black population.

On 9 June 1989 the government renewed the State of Emergency that had been declared on 12 June 1986. The decree included the harshest press restrictions in South Africa's history. Journalists are forbidden to publish any information regarded as subversive or which can be interpreted as encouraging opposition to the government, promoting the aims of outlawed organizations, supporting strikes, participating in a public demonstration or engaging in civil disobedience. Photo journalists are forbidden to film or tape-record areas of unrest or actions not approved in advance by the security forces. Anyone judged 'subversive' is guilty of an offence, and copies of any publications containing a subversive statement can be seized by the authorities. A new Bureau for Information would henceforth be the only authorized source for news under the State of Emergency.

The mainstream English-language white press struggles beside the smaller, alternative press and the black papers to tell as much of the daily story as possible. This means keeping a lawyer at the editor's elbow to vet any story that may have 'subversive' implications. On any day, a significant number of articles would fit that category. The degree of enforced self-censorship is indicated by the tally of government actions taken against South African and foreign journalists during 1989. About 150 journalists, domestic and foreign, were detained or arrested during the year. Several alternative newspapers were shut down for three months after receiving official 'warnings'. At least ten television crews had their video tapes confiscated. Several newspapers had their products seized by the authorities. Passports were denied to journalists, while others were taken into custody for being at the scene where 'police anticipated action'. The editor of the leading English daily was ordered to name the source of an article. He resisted despite threats of imprisonment. The warning was withdrawn five months later. In all such cases, the threat hanging over the head of a journalist is intended to serve as a deterrent to renewed acts displeasing to the government. The courts frequently sustain journalists defying governmental restraints even under the emergency declaration. The Law and Order Minister, for example, was directed by a court in 1989 to pay a reporter for injuries sustained during official action taken against the journalist. But court cases, even when won by the press, are expensive and time-consuming. So are the legal assistants needed to comply with emergency laws. All of this provides a separate climate of oppression within the larger, oppressive system of apartheid — and all in the context of a decentralized parliamentary culture.

Democratic governance

Highly centralized and fully functioning democratic governments provide the greatest freedom for journalists and consequently the most pluralistic channels of information and diversity of content. Yet officials in such countries — the United States, for example — seek with varying degrees of success to control the news. As part of positive acts, they stage interviews or 'photo opportunities' to dominate the day's news on television or in the newspapers. As part of negative steps, they add new restrictions, costs and time-consuming procedures to the functions of the Freedom of Information Act. The FOIA has enabled journalists and others to secure unclassified government documents from most departments since 1967.

American news media repeatedly attack such new restrictions as a loss of their constitutional rights. Yet the US system is the most permissive of all, enabling journalists to conduct intensive investigations of officials and their performance, undertake extensive crusades against policies and personalities, and place issues and objectives on the public agenda. All of this is done without an Official Secrets Act to protect even the most sensitive governmental information, and with the mere single-phrase commitment in the First Amendment of the Constitution: 'Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom ... of the press.' There is continuous tension, nevertheless, between the power of the state and the power wielded by the information media.

This tension is likely to increase in the US as the new communications technologies become more widely employed. The US government will be drawn willy-nilly into vital disputes between competing modes of communication. Cable systems will increasingly challenge over-the-air television channels for programming and viewers; telephone companies will seek rights to carry news and data now supplied by newspapers, magazines and computer networks; satellite systems will want to bypass telephone and other networks; and copier and telefax machines will vastly complicate the copyright and patent conventions.

New media and the restructuring of society

These new technologies have great potential to democratize the countries where they are introduced and are permitted to function. Indeed, the Revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe, like that in the Philippines in 1987, were party motored by these new communications technologies. The peoples' revolutions were inspired, informed and guided by the use of television and the newer media. A similar phenomenon under way in China in 1989 was aborted by overwhelming military force.

The Soviet Union provided the model for the strategic application of new mass communications to the vital restructuring of society as a whole. Mikhail Gorbachev and his colleagues saw that the new technologies were needed to reconstruct a civilian economy that fell increasingly short of the requirements of an industrial society. But these technologies — high speed computers, interactive electronic communications systems, telefaxes, copiers and, above all, an efficient telephone system that can easily be used by all the citizens — could only come at considerable political cost. Indeed, it is likely that long-distance ground networks in the USSR, long subject to centralized surveillance, will be bypassed by satellites carrying video, telephone and data communications. It is simply too expensive and time-consuming to replace outmoded terrestrial communications across the Soviet Union and the entire Comecon region of Central Europe. These new information media also empower individual citizens to use 'smart' machines, ask new questions and receive responses which may directly or indirectly challenge the current ideology, policy or administration. Western television programmes in Finland are also taped and circulated through the large video-cassette black market in the Soviet Union.

The dilemma facing the Soviet leadership was still more serious. Opting for perestroika (restructuring) was a revolutionary step in economics. Clearly, however, perestroika would not work without glasnost — a directed 'openness' in public discussion of common problems and possible solutions. Glasnost, too was fraught with risk. It encouraged not only the revisiting and historic re-revision of the bad old Stalinist era, but a measured examination of current policies and leaders as well. Glasnost, while still under broad management from the Party and journalists anointed by it, inevitably promised real openness in thinking and especially in the uses of the new communications technologies. For example, the automated Soviet telephone system was shut down for many months because censors could no longer monitor the automatic dialling system. But restrictions were later removed and telephones are once again automated — a requisite for efficient communication, particularly for international telephony. Most Soviet citizens have difficulty finding a nearby telephone, let alone a private instrument in their homes, or a telephone directory listing the call numbers of all other telephones in a city or other area.

Censorship is much less apparent though still effective. Controls are maintained by withholding official registration (and thereby facilities and supplies) from independent publishers. Several hundred *samizdat* (self-published) journals, nevertheless do manage to appear. Some employ government photocopiers surreptitiously. Some use tabletop computers bought or donated in the West. Telefax is used by others to send information from one part of the country to another. Clearly, these new communications technologies are a boon to unofficial publishers. Some reach hundreds and others tens of thousands of readers. Together they are creating a significant audience of intellectuals. In addition the official press has become livelier. In the forefront, liberal publications such as *Ogonyok* and *Moscow News* explore new subjects of Soviet history and current planning. It is virtually impossible, however, for a Soviet citizen in Siberia to secure a copy of *Moscow News*, though it is readily available in foreign-language editions in Rome, Paris, New York and elsewhere.

Samizdat publications published in Moscow on the whole consist of artistic, literary, religious and socio-political journals. Some periodicals (*Express-Chronicle* and *The Prisoners' Page*) are opposed to the regime. Some are published by former dissidents of the Brezhnev and Andropov eras. Some are reformist-socialist. The magazine *Glasnost*, edited by Sergei Grigoryants, is opposed to further 'Soviet experimentation' and says it is 'committed to intellectual pluralism'. Grigoryants, who served nearly ten years in prison for dissident acts before the present era, was detained several times in 1988 and 1989. Glasnost publishes reports and analyses by economists, journalists and sociologists who are highly critical of the government, as well as articles by others close to the establishment. A somewhat more moderate publication is *Referendum* edited by Lev Tinofeyev, a former associate of Grigoryants. *Referendum* is a professionally written journal which examines socio-political issues.

In this era of 'small' communications technologies, there are bound to be increasing numbers of unauthorized publications in the USSR. They are still considerably hampered by the withholding of newsprint, copy paper, cassettes and other reproduction supplies. Copy machines too are strictly controlled by the government, but *samizdat* publishers and their allies somehow manage to use government equipment on the quiet, a far cry from the tedious typing of articles on onionskin paper, six or eight pages at a time. That was the procedure during the dark days of *samizdat* publishing in the 1960s and 1970s. However, in 1989, Sergei Kuznetsov, editor of an unofficial Siberian journal, was physically abused and sentenced to three years in a labour camp for 'slandering' an official. Injured during a hunger strike in prison, he was later released.

For nearly two years, starting in 1988, the Supreme Soviet had before it drafts of the first Soviet Press Law. The official version was kept secret throughout most of that time. It was learned, however, that apart from extensive provisions governing the registration of journalists and the media, the two main issues were the continuation of censorship in some form, and the question of registering publications founded by individual citizens or unofficial groups. Only official organs had been permitted since Lenin shut down private publications seventy-three years before. Most of that time, unofficial publications (*samizdat*) had been banned and their writers imprisoned.

When the press draft was finally published in September 1989, several provisions were revealed. 'Misuse of freedom of the press ... using mass media of information for the purpose of inflicting harm on society and the government', though ambiguously defined, are to be penalized (Article 5). Media presumably may be created by individuals but only according to a new law that has yet to be clarified. New legalized control of the press is apparently being considered. Article 8 also refers to 'corrective labour' and the denial of registration of publications to 'persons not qualified'.

The Supreme Soviet took an unusual step while it was considering the press law. It received for examination an alternative, unofficial draft written by Yuri M. Baturin and two associates. Baturin is a member of the Institute of the State and Law of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The present writer met him in May when both were serving in their respective delegations to the London Information Forum of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), a permanent thirty-five nation, East-West organ of the 1975 Helsinki Accords.

Baturini's draft stated that censorship is 'not allowed'; subsequently, the document became somewhat ambiguous on this point. It also provided that an individual citizen may create an organ of mass information, even in competition with Tass, the official news agency; a 'founder' (publisher) may not 'interfere' with editorial work; journalists may give personal viewpoints; officials must receive journalists 'without delay' and face 'corrective labour' for two years for using 'compulsion' on a journalist.

The unofficial draft offered detailed provisions for registering news and information media created by individuals or unofficial groups. It called for prompt and full explanation for any denial of registration. Significantly, the alternative-press-law draft appeared several times in official Soviet publications, including the April 1989 number of *XX Century and Peace*, an organ of the Soviet Peace Committee, long regarded as an instrument of USSR peace initiatives abroad.

Before publishing the text of the alternative-press-law draft, the magazine quoted the free-flow-of-information commitment of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The editors added: 'It seems clear to us that the practice of preliminary censorship of the mass media, as accepted in the USSR, runs counter to the above-mentioned provisions [of the Universal Declaration].'

Speaking in Geneva as the official draft was being debated in Moscow, Justice Minister Veniamin Yakoviev called the text 'a giant step' in democratic reforms, though it might hinder efforts to cope with economic problems. Presumably the circulation of diverse views may interfere with centralized management. An observer from *Moscow News* recalled that Abraham Lincoln, when asked which he thought was more important, free elections or free press, replied, 'A free press: free elections cannot be held without it.' The Supreme Soviet and the people should be reminded of this, said *Moscow News*. Vitaly Korotich, editor of the liberal weekly newsmagazine *Ogonyok*, told an American audience, 'Now my government pays for my paper, gives me a publisher. But,' he added, 'I am fighting for the new press law. They must allow us to have an independent press.'

The Soviet Union did more than provide the model of glasnost for the pro-democracy forces in Eastern Europe. Mikhail Gorbachev signaled that his military and political power would not be used to oppose the reformist tendencies as did Soviet troops in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. With that assurance the pro-democracy forces that had been working underground for years in Poland and Hungary came to the surface.

New communication technologies had been an important factor in creating and sustaining political dissent. Telephones, radio and television played a vital role in the reform process. Telecommunications helped speed the message of reform from one country to another in the former East bloc. 'Whatever may have been responsible for the onset of the democratic movements in Poland, Hungary and East Germany, it can be said that this would not have happened without telecommunications.' said Christian Schwarz-Schilling, West Germany's Minister of Post and Telecommunications.[3] 'Without telecommunications, information in the free West would not have penetrated the communist countries which were sealed off from the outer world by barbed wire and walls. Without telecommunications the call for freedom would not have spread so rapidly,' the West German official said. He called for the release from export control regulators of digital phone technologies to Central Europe.

A number of cases

A review of the uses of telecommunication and related technologies in the process leading to greater democratization is instructive not only for the future of those countries, but as a model for many other places where they can generate political reform.

Poland

After a year of open resistance by the Solidarity union, General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in December 1981. Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, began extensive underground activities. For eight years, the illegal opposition taped cassettes, published a wide variety of books and magazines using copy machines, had access to telefax receivers and transmitted verbal polemics as 'creepers' beneath the actual pictures on official Polish television. So extensive was the opposition's use of broadcast statements on cassettes and other instruments that the government's own radio found it necessary to respond to the underground's messages. Satellite dishes capable of receiving foreign telecasts dotted the Polish landscape. Following massive strikes in 1988, the official government trade union leader agreed to debate with Walesa on television. Solidarity assumed that the party would rig the debate by taping and editing it to the government's advantage. Solidarity simply demanded that a clock be visible throughout the debate. If the hands jumped the audience would know that the event had been taped and cut. Walesa won hands down.

By January 1989 the Communist Party agreed to hold talks with Solidarity. The 'roundtable' meeting produced an agreement to legalize the trade union and schedule elections for a partly representative parliament. The 4 July election — Poland's first free poll — resulted in an overwhelming victory for Solidarity candidates. By August a Solidarity official became Prime Minister (though communists still controlled the military and internal security). A Solidarity journalist was named editor-in-chief of the government's daily newspaper. Opposition journalist Andrzej Drawiz became head of the committee controlling state television and radio. He fired three prominent news anchors who were associated with the previous government. The Polish Journalists Association, outlawed in 1982, was legalized again just before the elections. The president of the association, Stefan Bratkowski, pleaded for more than money. He called for 'an intellectual Marshall Plan', an infusion of information tools — videotapes, books and other teaching materials.

An author of books in the 'second circulation', i.e. the Polish underground press before 1989, told the London Information Forum that his was a 'peculiar country'. Tomsaz Jastrun described pre-revolutionary Poland as a country 'where contrasts are greater than in many capitalist countries, where the poor are not so poor as to be really poor and the rich not so rich as to be satisfied. Where Communist party members often don't believe in Marx, but quite often believe in God; and if they don't believe in Marx or God, they certainly believe in the Polish Pope.'

Poles, who sometimes stand in line for hours to buy a book, said Jastrun, do not know whether they are in the nineteenth century or the twentieth, whether in the Third World or the Fourth, although they seldom seem to be in Eastern Europe. 'We are linked to the brave West European dreams by our long democratic tradition, two hundred years of occupation, and persistent faith in freedom and democracy.' And, he underscored, 'those two words, freedom and democracy, are always said in the same breath in our country.' The 'eyes of all our bloody uprisings looked in the direction of the West, including the last peaceful uprising of Solidarity in 1980.'

Jastrun was at the shipyard in Gdansk when Solidarity was founded. He suffered censorship and worse during the years the labour union was outlawed. After the 'roundtable' rapprochement in April between Lech Walesa and General Jaruzelski, underground publications were able to surface. To secure such liberalization, he said, the underground press played 'an enormous role'. Their publication of books, journals and cassettes in great numbers for twenty-three years broke the Communist party's monopoly on information. In the context of the censorship at the time, he added, such publishing was — 'I am not afraid of this word,' he said — criminal activity. As a consequence, Jastrun's typewriter, confiscated during a 1984 search of his apartment for 'dangerous manuscripts of poems', was as late as May 1989 still a 'prisoner of the secret service on Rakowiecka Street',

The ruling party was formally dissolved, a free vote was held, and a timetable set for multiparty elections in 1990. The impact of new communication technologies on the realities of 1989 can be assessed from an appeal by Irena Lasota, a Polish activist. She made the following appeal in the underground weekly *Przeglad Wiadomosci Agencyjnych*, #206 on 22 September 1989 (the Polish censor did not allow the Solidarity weekly to publish it):

> Since the mid-1970s significant amounts of printing equipment have been brought into Poland. Shipments increased after the rise of Solidarity in August 1980, and again after the crackdown in December 1981. Thousands of newspapers, news-sheets, journals, leaflets and books have been printed on this equipment. Much of this equipment has worn out, and a great deal has been confiscated by the police.
>
> Now the situation has changed: many periodicals and publishing houses are leaving the underground; others are disbanding.
>
> Poland is surrounded by countries in which underground publishing is rapidly developing. However, there is virtually no printing equipment available there. Unofficial books are copied on typewriters. Leaflets are made by hand.
>
> The Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe appeals to everyone who has spare equipment (mimeographs, offset machines, silk screens, dyes, chemicals, etc.) to take it to East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Ukraine and other countries that need it. We also request that training courses be organized, in Poland or in neighbouring countries, to teach people how to use such equipment. Printing technology in these countries is over a decade behind that of Poland. Tape recorders, fax machines, and copiers are also needed — as are periodicals and books in Polish and in the other East European languages. Every Polish tourist who travels to a neighbouring country should bring along copies of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Przeglad Wiadomosci Agencyjnych* and other independent papers and books printed in Poland and in the West. In addition, centres should be set up in Poland for visitors from these countries with materials in their own languages.
>
> What has been achieved in Poland is the hope and dream of her neighbours. Poles should lend a helping hand not only for their neighbours' sake, but for their own as well: a democratizing Poland needs democratizing neighbours.

Hungary

For several years, the economists of Hungary prepared the way for the political revolution of 1989. Journalists and intellectuals were active supporters in the political underground. Some 150,000 satellite dishes aimed at Western programmes were scattered throughout Hungary. Press freedom is 'not a gift from government but something we've taken ourselves,' said Gaspar Miklos Tamas at the Information Forum. The Hungarian writer, formerly blacklisted, said the degree of press freedom achieved in his country by that time resulted from: (1) the internal collapse of the regime and the loss of its credibility among Party members and the general public; and (2) public pressure for information and truth. The liberalization of the press in Hungary, as in Poland, started at the bottom of society and influenced the leadership. In the Soviet Union glasnost was devised by the Kremlin primarily as a management tool.

Not so in Hungary. Writers who were active in the underground were suddenly published in the official press. Political change paralleled change in communications. In May 1989 Hungary demolished part of the barbed wire barrier on the Austrian border and later allowed East Germans free access to the West.

Czechoslovakia

The Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia was a clear case of communications playing a key role at the most crucial moment in the popular nonviolent uprising. Late in October the arrest of playwright Vaclav Havel, a long-time opponent of the regime, drew 10,000 protesters onto the streets. Police broke up the demonstration — but it was to be the last time. Mass protests brought out 350,000 people in Prague just a month after the last crackdown. A general strike followed, the Communist party yielded absolute power, and agreed to permit a free press — a major component of the popular demand. The fundamental change in Czech journalism was a gradual process. The masses in the streets not only demanded a freer press, but their very presence called for a new kind of reporting. This is described by Milek Kronpicka, a reporter on National Radio:

> First, we began reporting differing opinions. Our editors didn't stop us. Then we reported a little more. When the editors tried to stop us, we didn't listen. We just told the truth.[4]

At a crucial moment, in Czechoslovakia as elsewhere in Eastern Europe in 1989, journalists on the government's payroll, i.e. civil servants, simply changed sides and became instruments of the popular clamour for democracy. Without their truthful reporting of the magnitude of the disillusionment and demand for reform, it would have been much more difficult to mobilize the entire population and replace the oppressive regime. 'Information was the key,' said a leader of the Civic Forum opposition: 'Once the masses knew what was going on, they supported us.'[5]

A crucial single changeover occurred as street protests mounted in intensity. Vaclav Havel, recently released from detention, addressed the throngs from the balcony of a newspaper office in Wenceslas Square. The paper was *Svobodne Slovo*, a Socialist Party daily which had generally followed the Communist Party line. 'That day,' said a journalist on the paper, 'we saw what was going on below us and we couldn't ignore it any longer.' The newspaper's turnabout not only provided a significant reportorial lift to the opposition but gave the pro-democracy movement, quite literally, a platform. Radio journalists soon launched a petition to force the director's resignation. When he refused to go, they threatened to strike and he resigned. The noncommunist government hopes to institutionalize freedom of the press. Newspapers such as *Lidovic Noviny*, which had been banned, reappeared and sought financial support from abroad.

Perhaps the most revealing sign of changed times was the commentary that appeared on 18 December 1989 in *Rude Pravo*, the Communist Party's daily newspaper.[6] The paper apologized to 'all those who had been hurt' in its pages. 'Over the past years our paper has printed a number of stories that our editors cannot be proud of,' wrote Zdenek Porybny, *Rude Pravo*'s new editor. He admitted that 'serious political debate was abandoned in favour of personal attacks and the abuse of persons whose opinions differed from those of the Communist leadership.' The newspaper had tried to discredit Alexander Dubcek, the leader of the failed 'Prague Spring' reforms of 1968, and former dissident Vaclav Havel, now President. 'Stories such as "Stool Pigeon", "Who is Vaclav Havel?" "Dubcek's Journey From Tragedy to Farce" and others did not express ... the (true) attitudes of most of the paper's editors,' the commentary went on. The new editor at *Rude Pravo* is just one of several changes in Czechoslovakia's state-controlled media. A new editor has also taken charge of the state news agency CTK. Former government spokesman Miroslav Pavel now heads the state TV. He pledged that television would no longer be an 'ideological instrument for one party'. The network, he said, must be 'a true reflection of the face of this nation'.[7] The 28 November commitment by the Czech government to yield its 41-year monopoly on political power gave the opposition access to the communications media and the right to publish a daily newspaper. Even before that agreement was reached the police were called in to secure the central television station in Prague. Factions inside as well as outside the Communist party were jockeying for position by controlling the major channels of mass communication. When the Communist-dominated Parliament voted unanimously on 29 December to elect opposition leader Vaclav Havel as the first non-Communist president in four decades, the unprecedented vote was televised nationwide.

German Democratic Republic

The land dominated by Erick Honecker for thirteen years was slow to join the Revolution of 1989. Once the popular unrest surfaced, however, change came swiftly. In October-November, the mass exodus to the West, outflanking the Berlin Wall, provided the clearest vote of no-confidence in the country's harsh physical and ideological controls. However, the arrest and replacement of Honecker was not enough to stem the tide. The Wall was broken open and its destruction begun. The world's primary symbol of self-isolation fell.

All of this had gradually been prepared for many years by an uninterrupted flow of news and commentary from Western Europe. Deutsche Welle, the West German broadcasting service, bolstered by the American Radio Free Europe and the British Broadcasting Corporation, had provided citizens of the then German Democratic Republic (GDR) with detailed reports and pictures of life in pluralist societies. Indeed, West German television was more popular in nearby East German cities than the GDR's own channels. Consequently, by mid-November ADN, the official GDR news agency, announced that two state-run newspapers, *Neue Zeit* and the *Berliner Zeitung*, would begin carrying television programme listings for West German networks which were received in most parts of East Germany. At the same time, in an unusual display of spontaneity, five political officials spent a half-hour on television replying to phoned-in questions. There were no opposition representatives on the panel. A veteran broadcast commentator, known for his rigid views, was asked whether promised change in the press would lead to his unemployment. He said he knew that that was what some people wished, but that it would not happen.[8] A few days later, in an unparalleled airing of criticism, the GDR's state-run media published workers' complaints. In forty years the print media had devoted most of their space to favourable reports on national production achievements and virulent attacks on the capitalist West. The Communist Party newspaper, following the political changes, published twenty-two letters from readers concerned about the current situation. 'The time has come for our media to report what is really going on in the country,' wrote one reader.

Romania

The 1989 Revolution came to Romania — one of the most isolated and harshest-governed Eastern European countries — swiftly and without mass preparation. The final hours are best described by Tass, the Soviet news agency, and Agerpres, the Romanian press agency. The former reported:

> 'The dictator is no more! Long live freedom! Jubilation surged though Bucharest and the entire nation this afternoon.'
>
> Chanting 'The Army is with us!' and 'We are the people!', protesters mixed with soldiers in the Boulevard of the Republic early in the morning. Hundreds of people climbed onto tanks and armoured vehicles waving banners that read 'We Are for Freedom', 'Democracy Now', and 'Down With Dictatorship'.
>
> Combat vehicles turned towards the building of the Party Central Committee in Palace Square. Jubilant crowds accompanied them, their drivers no longer frowning but smiling in sympathy with the people.

After several hours a Tass correspondent, hailed by those whose job was to check documents, went to the Romanian television station. Tens of thousands of people surrounded the headquarters of the demonstration. From there, the entire country heard the voices of those who were bold enough to take on Ceausescu and his circle.

'The day has come at last when we can tell the world the truth from Romania,' the director of Agerpres news agency, Alexandru Ionescu, told Tass. 'The day has come when hateful censorship will cease trying to pass off tyranny for democracy and absolute power for scientific socialism.'

Romanian television then broadcast a report of the Committee for National Salvation. It urged people crowded in the square to leave it so that forces of the National Defense Ministry could destroy the terrorist forces of the State Security Service operating in the Central Committee building.

A fierce exchange of fire was heard in the city for over two hours. Searchlights pierced the skies. There were sounds of powerful explosions. Television reported that gas communications were being blown up.

The television centre was crowded with well-known actors, politicians, army generals as well as ordinary people, their faces expressing joy and anxiety. News arrived that special service troops led by the people loyal to the ousted leader were converging upon Bucharest.

Thousands of people surrounding the television centre were calling for a last stand.

Factions loyal to the deposed and later executed Nicolae Ceausescu, leader for forty years, sought to retake the television studios. Mass communications then became a military objective as well as a propaganda instrument. The national broadcast centre suffered a heavy assault. Ceausescu's élite guard launched fierce attacks to silence the broadcasts but the station remained on the air. At one point a news editor declared on the air, 'We are under attack,' and urged listeners to rally outside the building and shield the voice of the revolution. Infiltrators knifed people in the hallways. For a short time, the TV screen went blank. Later on Agerpres reported from Bucharest:

> The Romanian News Agency Agerpres no longer needs the censorship's special approval to issue false reports on the national situation that have no real basis.
>
> Along with the entire central and local press, the radio and television, all the mass media, Agerpres will do its duty and inform faithfully, honestly and in a civilized manner local and international public opinion about all the events in Romania and the world.
>
> We will give the press and all international news agencies a complete and honest image of all events in Romania.

This text was written by the Romanian news agency journalists who never lost their professional conscience, those who until the day before had been compelled to depict reality other than it really was and systematically disinform national and international public opinion.

The CSCE, information pluralism and policy changes

The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was signed in August 1975. Thirty-five countries of Eastern and Western Europe (except Albania) as well as Canada and the United States agreed to an elaborate set of principles and guidelines for their domestic as well as internal behaviour in the fields of military security, economics and human rights. These unprecedented agreements stipulated that every word and every section of this sizeable document had equal validity. Most important, the 1975 accords mandated that review conferences be held repeatedly by the 35 nations to examine their compliance with each of the commitments. Such reviews were conducted for more than a year in Belgrade, three years in Madrid and for shorter periods in other cities in Canada and Europe.

The quality and diversity of information available to citizens within each country and concerning the other signatory countries was part of the CSCE agenda. Indeed, in May 1989 the CSCE conducted an Information Forum devoted exclusively to the information commitments of the 1975 accords. The forum was remarkable for the frankness with which delegations from Eastern and Western Europe examined one another's official policies regarding the flow of information. One could already detect the deep policy differences in Eastern Europe. Delegates from Poland and Hungary, including government opponents, challenged the then hardline policies of Romania and Czechoslovakia. 'Give us time', the Czech delegate pleaded. The Romanian adamantly defended the Ceausescu regime still in control. The remarkable thing about what has come to be known as 'the Helsinki process' is that the 1975 Act set in motion a new set of governmental standards that would ultimately affect even the most closed societies among the signatories. These new standards were particularly significant, I believe, in the field of information flows. While only a relatively small section of the 1975 Act is devoted to information, the entire CSCE process is fundamentally based on the exchange of information that had never before been legitimized as a subject for international examination, analysis and debate.

Hundreds of cases of human rights violations were presented in the oral and written records of the CSCE review conferences. 'Naming of names' became the hallmark of these conferences. While prevalent policies of censorship and information distortion were known to journalists working in their own censorship-ridden societies or as visiting correspondents in such nations, there had been no systematic channel for challenging press-control policies until the CSCE reviews began. While the full value of these reviews cannot be clearly estimated, however, bureaucrats, intellectuals and journalists from nations having crippling censorship laws were forced to answer the charges against their national policies made in the CSCE reviews. In addition, Helsinki Watch groups[9] were established in many countries. In places where censorships was harshest, Watch volunteers were the object of attacks, imprisonment and in several instances, death. Yet one may assume that the Helsinki Process forced the bureaucracy in its secret deliberations to weigh the veracity of the charges of human rights violations, including censorship, and ultimately the cost of such policies in both internal and external relations. It is significant that the Soviet Union has included in its policy of glasnost a fresh commitment to the CSCE process. CSCE appears likely to become a major forum for East-West negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe as well as on the linkage of new informational systems and networks. Mr Gorbachev refers to this process as enlarging 'the European home' to include the Soviet Union and Central Europe particularly as Western Europe is bringing down many national barriers after 1992.

Censor to be replaced by regulator

Among the major lessons learned from the Revolutions of 1989 was the role of mass communications in informing the population prior to the revolution, mobilizing popular unrest at crucial moments, acting to secure public access to channels of information and dissemination during the struggle, and assuring a continuing flow of information and diverse views in the post-revolutionary period.

It would be hazardous to predict the immediate paths ahead for the new societies of Central Europe. They may or may not develop democratic polities. They may or may not finally fix post-World War II boundaries; in other words, they may or may not resolve the ethnic and nationality issues which predate the First World War. Neither of those wars has ensured the right of self-determination that so many people sought to obtain.

What has been demonstrated by the Revolutions of 1989, however, is that mass communications are no longer principally a propaganda asset of governments in power, but are rather a threat to any regime that insists on controlling virtually all the news and information that the public is entitled to. An information-muzzling regime must in future be aware that its own credibility is crucially undermined by the very fact that it censors and stimulates the self-censorship of journalists and other dispensers of public information. Such regimes must now understand that future developments in communication technologies will further democratize the policies and politics of all nations, even those with highly centralized political and informational systems at present.

The main implication for political policy-makers is the tendency of these new communication technologies to generate plural channels of information, diversity of information and the capacity for two-way public interaction in real time between participants other than central authorities. These three attributes — pluralism, diversity and two-way interaction — engender independent analysis and open the way to dissent from establishment policies. All of this reduces the potential for monolithic, centralized information control and direct or self-imposed censorship.

These new technologies should be examined for their liberating as well as their negative possibilities if they are to be linked by networks which come under a new form of governmental or entrepreneurial monopoly. We should examine these and the need for monitoring and regulation by governmental agencies committed to democratic processes. It is virtually certain that by 2020 most countries will be linked to an Integrated System of Digital Networks (ISDN) — the networking of networks, both domestic and international. Through ISDN most people almost anywhere in the world would be within easy reach of a telephone. The telephone and its digital keyboard connected to computers will provide a wide variety of information services: news, history, culture, data, banking, marketing, etc. through words, pictures, data, sound and other communication techniques. Scores of different channels and services will enable diverse subjects and viewpoints to be seen and heard over great distances, again a boon to libertarians and a check on censorious regimes. But, even in democratic societies committed to press freedom, many fundamental decisions will have to be made as new communication technologies create clashes of rights between established information systems enjoying constitutional protection and the newer technologies that have previously been regarded as public carriers not affecting the content of the information flow they convey domestically or internationally. All this is changing. The telephone, long considered a 'carrier' similar to the telegraph and the railroad, will seek to compete with newspapers and broadcasters in delivering news and information over its vast networks already in place. Cable television will wish to retain monopoly control in those areas where it alone has had the right to create a new network and determine for all its viewers — not necessarily with their agreement — what shall or shall not be viewed on its cable system. Telefax tied to the telephone and copiers enlarged to produce newssheets will compete with newspapers and book publishers. Computers will also produce printed materials competing with older forms. More importantly, computers in networks will rival telephones and the mails for instantaneous communication between individuals and groups, large and small. Keeping all these diverse systems open to all, and without prejudice to the proprietary rights of the creators of information, will be a major responsibility of governments. Indeed, the day of the censor is rapidly passing. The era of democratic regulation of information flows is upon us.

Telecommunication is already so pervasive in North America that its products, problems and promises call for the formulation of national policies. The new instruments of communication have to be formally defined either as carriers not entitled to influence the messages they convey or, more, realistically, as formulators of editorial decisions.

Defined as such they would be protected by the First Amendment to engage in competitive editorial practices. But when the right of press freedom exerted by one form of technology clashes with that of another, some regulatory agent will be needed to resolve the conflict equitably in the public interest. This first vital definition will affect the performance of the diverse instruments of communication linked to telephone lines or in some other ways to ISDN. Because the latter will be a network of networks, the greater problems will arise *after* the new telecommunications media have been defined, presumably as editorial rather than technological entities.

Whether one examines these matters in the context of the United States, Western Europe or Japan, the basic divisions will remain essentially political. Technologies with a broad impact are developed and maintained in a political context. Public decisions have to be made concerning: allocation of funds for research and development, both private and public; ownership and management of the new system; the impact it will have on the systems in place or contemplated; linkage with systems in other nations; assurance of fair standards of operation and profit; and, most sensitive of all, the degree of regulation to be imposed by domestic or international bodies. At each of these steps and others, political decisions will be made. Information will be able to challenge state power as never before in most countries. Democratic societies, and those which aspire to democracy, will have to address the regulation of telecommunications as a high-priority policy issue. The challenge: to employ regulatory agencies as essential traffic directors with full commitment to the free flow of information and the prevention of governmental or entrepreneurial monopolies. Most importantly, the new regulators must not replace the old censors.

Telecommunications are increasingly international in scope and character. Anti-trust suits in the US have restructured the telephone industry, once the world's largest and most efficient. Now, parts of the old domestic system are entering the international field. Bell Atlantic sells phone system hardware in Italy. Nynex (the New York system) is providing services in Poland and Hungary. Pacific Telesis is involved in British cable television. US West plans to lay fibre-optic cable across the Soviet Union. Bell South plays a role in a French cellular system. Deregulation as well as regulation and re-regulation has changed the industries in Japan and Western Europe (looking toward 1992) as well as the US. The revised broadcasting bill in the United Kingdom (December 1989) will expand radio and television outlets in the 1990s. The principal aims are to provide more choice for the public and safeguard standards in programming. There would be a 'light-touch' regulatory body, rather than a heavy-handed one, to maintain quality programmes as well as competition. Even the components of the technologies are increasingly international in standards and development. Who, then, will regulate the new telecommunications in the interest of national and international publics? Many questions of citizen rights arise as information crosses national boundaries or moves from one system to another either domestically or internationally. There is also the matter of the right of innovation or invention. The work of scientists and technologists must be protected so that they can explore new possibilities and extend the limits of their own expertise.

Before universal linkage is achieved through ISDN, the formulators of social policy must address the plight of the unconnected. Though telephone service is available to almost all United States citizens, some are still off-line. There are 2.2 billion telephones in the United States for a population of 248 million — an average of 9 phones for every citizen — but an estimated 5 million Americans (2 per cent) have no access to private phone service. In developing countries most citizens do not have access to personal telephones. In India there are residential phone lines for 22 per cent of the population. Since ISDN will link various networks over telephone lines, mainly operated through computer terminals, the information gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' will widen considerably. A state that regards itself as being responsible for the basic welfare of its citizens should address the disparity of access to telecommunications. Deprivation of such access will as surely deny a citizen equal opportunity for personal development as would barring a child from all forms of education. At the international level, the hallmark of a 'good-citizen' state similarly will be the assistance it provides developing countries to secure greater opportunity to tap into the ISDN networks of information. To provide such assistance, within its own borders or outside, a government will have to set traffic rules.

Regulation, obviously, is not the best method of assuring free expression or the free flow of ideas; neither does it necessarily undermine the free flow of information. The regulated monopoly of the US privately operated telephone system produced not only an efficient communication link for a large geographic area, but managed to cut costs even while extending services into high-cost rural areas. This was accomplished with support from the government's Rural Electrification Commission and a price regulation system that kept down charges to customers in rural areas. These customers were, in effect, partly subsidized by users in low-cost urban areas. Overall government regulation provided an equitable system that brought all parts of the country onto telephone lines at affordable costs.

Government control can also impede development, reduce the likelihood of financial profit and limit international telecommunications. In most countries, the Postal, Telephone and Telegraph service (PTT), being government owned and operated, sets the prices for calls to or from a foreign country. Generally PTTs take a disproportionate share of such charges. In addition to high collection rates, some PTTs also engage in questionable accounting practices. Such methods inhibit competition by telephony from abroad, yet invite the faster development of alternative systems using satellites and cable facilities. With the PTTs, as with broadcasting in the US, scarcity is no longer a rationale for outdated communications regulations.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) concluded in 1987 that the Fairness Doctrine was no longer necessary 'to ensure the public's access to viewpoint diversity'. The doctrine required radio and television stations to carry more than one side of the discussion of major public issues. This requirement was based on the premise that the broadcast spectrum was limited (and, therefore, also licensed by the government) and should be regulated to ensure fairness in the use of the public's airwaves. By 1987, however, the FCC noted that 10,500 broadcast outlets were operating, and new media such as cable television and video cassette recorders (VCRs) provided adequate opportunity for diverse ideas to be received by the public. The FCC also pointed out that the number of daily newspapers had declined steadily to 1,700 and that they are protected against governmental interference in their editorial content by the First Amendment of the Constitution. In effect, the FCC's action acknowledged that the broadcast services deserve greater First Amendment protection. Some critics wondered, however, whether by this action the FCC had removed the entire constitutional basis for its own existence; that is, for licensing broadcast media while the print media remain unlicensed and unregulated by governmental policies. The FCC still applies rules for political broadcasts, restricting personal attacks and indecent broadcasts, access to prime-time programming and cable television.

This FCC controversy underscores the further blurring of the boundaries between print and broadcast media, and the policy issues thereby generated. Cable television and its round-the-clock news-feeds in the US, Europe and Asia — Cable News Network (CNN) — compete with the news departments of major television networks on several continents, and with newspapers attempting to keep pace with the day's events. VCRs provide alternative entertainment and, increasingly, news and documentary material formerly found on television or in newspapers and magazines. Satellite master antenna television is also eroding the over-air TV market. Newspapers and magazines increasingly use telephone lines, the broadcast spectrum and facsimile to produce their product in distant places. Videotex, a two-way interactive medium, connects the home TV or personal computer to a central data base, usually linked by telephone circuit. this hybrid makes printed documents in electromagnetic form. If videotex gains consumer support, it would compete with traditional print and broadcast media.

Political pressures have been mounting in many countries of Europe and Asia as well as in North America for divesting governments of radio and television stations. Many new independent channels have been created and some state-run media in Western Europe and Asia privatized. The appearance of diverse new technologies has not only caused the FCC to remove the 'scarcity' premise for regulation, but fostered free-market competition as a public-interest value. This implies that a free market is a higher goal than a welfare or public-service economy. That premise supports privatization but it does not necessarily lead to less regulation by government. In the interest of ensuring pluralism in operating systems and diversity in their content, the central authority may sustain the new independent media in all forms. But officials may institute more vigilance and a larger bureaucracy to ensure that the new rules of the road are observed equitably: that no new monopolies develop either within one media system, or by dangerous cross-ownership of different media systems. An example of the complexity of benefiting the public by new, broad-scale linkages is the two-prong electric plug being developed for the twelve EEC countries. After 1992 the new plug will enable an electric razor bought in London to operate in Brussels or Rome. At present, only France and Germany have compatible plugs. The new plug fits no socket now in use. Adopting any country's present plug would give that nation an advantage — so all must replace plugs. Before long, there will be a universal plug, just as computers will be developed with 'standard architecture' that can 'talk' to any other computer anywhere. Should not the Europlug be held off until the worldplug is developed? And should not all computers adopt standard architecture as soon as possible?

Transborder data flows

The regulatory systems of the past, particularly in small countries, were well aware of the complexities of trade, postal services or communication crossing national boundaries. The larger nations, such as the United States, remained far less aware of these until tension developed over regulation of international data flows, restrictions were introduced on cross-border broadcasting by satellite (DBS) and demands were made by developing countries for guaranteed future slots for geostationary satellites.

Such tensions are certain to increase. They will require careful formulation of public policy on such complex issues as transborder data flows. Each political system will appraise these issues differently. Some will give the highest priority to the protection of its individual citizens' privacy. Others will be more concerned to sustain a free-market system. Still others will primarily support statist controls over the flow of information and communications. Provision should be made to ensure greater access for developing countries to scientific, technological, financial and medical data. There are well-founded fears that total deregulation and unrestrained market flows can overwhelm Third World cultures and inhibit the development of free economies in those countries. What is deemed a private-sector interest or value in one country may be a nationalized system in another. At best, protecting fast-moving electronic data, for example, requires highly complex criteria and monitoring. It should be possible to combine global deregulation of data flows with national regulation and technical and financial assistance in supporting Third World developments. For example, the US Government could urge American telecommunication companies operating in developing countries to adopt certain guidelines. The Sullivan Principles, adopted by US firms to avoid supporting apartheid in South Africa, are a useful precedent.

If a government is to regulate cross-border data flows to protect the privacy of its citizens from invasion from a data base in a foreign country, questions such as the following have to be answered:

How may personal information be entered into a system for use by private and government organizations? Was that information received with the knowledge of the citizens? Or was it received second-hand from an information system linked, without the citizen's knowledge, to another channel? Who may use the primary channel, and who may employ the secondary one? How are such decisions to be made, and how far shared? When may the subject citizen learn of the use made of his file, and does he have the right to correct, restrict or eliminate it?

One may expect that the great flow of personal information now available in independent systems will be tapped for interrelated data — or, at worst, for mischievous use of unrelated data to achieve objectives potentially harmful to the citizen. Great volumes of data are now filed in US government systems of consumer credit, social security, income taxation, insurance, banking and census. Left compartmentalized, these data files may not be harmful to an individual. But once correlated, they may not only deprive an individual of privacy but subject him to untoward scrutiny and embarrassment. The computer may reveal a job applicant's past illness, minor altercations with the police, and credit card payments for objects or places best kept private. Canada and many Western European countries have boards to investigate abuses of personal data systems, but such legislation is slow in evolving in the US.

There is, on the other hand, some pressure in the US to expand the interaction among computer files containing personal records. While the Privacy Act of 1974 was intended to limit such symbiosis, some 127 matches of different files had been undertaken by federal agencies by April 1985.[10] The demand for government efficiency spurs some matching of computer files. Such checks can reveal duplication of services (a boon for efficiency) as well as unrelated histories of individuals (a potential source of embarrassment). They can also uncover those who seek new credit or other government support after having failed to meet their past obligations to the government. Parents who leave town to escape child support payments may also be tracked by matching the computer files. These are also violations of personal privacy – yet are such violations socially justifiable? Despite the immediate value to efficiency and even social justice, is such computer symbiosis a violation of US constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizure? Purchases by computer, telephone call numbers, even computer-file accessions, pharmaceutical purchases and rental of VCRs can all reveal aspects of a citizen's life that he may want kept private. These raise crucial policy questions that should rightly be on the agenda in democratic states wherever the linkage of information, computers and communication — i.e. telecommunications — influences personal privacy.

Beepers used by doctors, journalists and others to tell them that their office wants them to call can have an unpleasant second use. Such devices can be accessed secretly to maintain surveillance of the individual using it. So, too, the caller identification system now becoming available on telephones. The ID tells a receiver the phone number of the person calling. But suppose the caller does not want to be identified? He may want to call the police anonymously, or order a product without being placed on a permanent mailing list. Closed circuit television has long been used to watch shoppers and bank depositors, and occasionally catch a shoplifter or a bankrobber. These same systems can be used for far less acceptable purposes in ways predicted by George Orwell in *1984*.

Another innovation is the 'smart card'. This combines an identification document and computerized information in miniature format. The British phone system is planning a personal number for everyone to advance the use of mobile phones. The number will appear on a 'smart card' along with information on where to divert calls if necessary. Considerable personal information can be put on a piece of plastic the size of a credit card. For other uses, the individual's picture and fingerprints may be included with whatever personal data the organization may require. While 'smart cards' may have the obvious advantage of enabling the bearer to secure extensive credit and have purchases automatically billed and paid, they would give many more strangers immediate access to highly personalized data. This would be an increasingly crucial issue if smart cards were to carry medical and psychiatric histories, police records, separation and divorce details and other aspects of personal identity. Although there is no present movement toward these highly personal questions, the nature of the system virtually assures the raising of such issues in the future. It would be well to establish policy guidelines in advance.

The new electronic data flows must also be employed on behalf of the citizen in monitoring the activities of the government. The Freedom of Information Act (1967) was created to enable citizens, including journalists, to secure unclassified documents and correspondence from most federal agencies. FOIA was passed before the era of electronic data filing. The act should be amended to facilitate access to electronic files. The United States Government now spends an estimated $15 billion a year on electronic data systems. The Departments of Commerce and Labor, the Census Bureau and other technical services make available specialized reports and statistics. Some 250 books of census data may be purchased from the Commerce Department for $250. The full text of the voluminous *Congressional Record* will soon be on offer electronically. The Environmental Protection Agency expects to make available information on 300 toxic chemicals. The Security and Exchange Commission which regulates corporate stock markets is adding millions of pages of corporate reports each year to its Electronic Data Gathering Systems (EDGAR). Much other government information is bartered to commercial networks which charge for use by the public. Citizens should have easy access to some 500 government databases. Policy decisions will be needed here to determine how the public may secure electronic data including government correspondence by the simplest means and at the lowest cost. As soon as ISDN is in place in the United States and elsewhere, entrance to governmental electronic information sources will be far more widely accessible. The foreign as well as domestic demand for electronic public information will increase substantially.

Protection of intellectual property

As the new communication technologies proliferate, the need to protect individual creativity and especially intellectual products will increase exponentially. From 1982 to 1986 seventeen nations passed new copyright laws concerned mainly with computer software, semi-conductor products, home taping, piracy, satellite broadcasting and folklore. National and international discussions of copyright include the distribution of radio and television programmes by cable, public lending and rental of copyrighted material, and works in the public domain.[11] 'Piracy of intellectual property is costing the United States tens of billions of dollars in lost sales and royalties,' said Gary M. Hoffman, principal author of a 1989 study at Northwestern University.[12]

It will be particularly difficult to register and monitor news and informational messages created electronically and transmitted great distances by computers over telephone lines. For years, global news flows and video cassettes have been pirated without credit or compensation to the producers. Photocopies make it easy to pirate books, magazines and articles. Telefax enables intellectual pirates to operate at some distance from source. Off-the-air video taping simplifies the theft of news, information and entertainment programmes for illegal use and sale. A new hazard is appearing in the form of photojournalism. The new digital photographic systems can alter pictures undetectably. *National Geographic* magazine in 1982 slightly shifted one of the Great Pyramids at Gaza to enable a photo to fit on the magazine's cover. Digital photography is faster and cheaper, but tampering must be banned if the product is to be credible. These and other breaches of intellectual proprietary rights will become far more widespread in the age of ISDN. The networking of vast numbers of national and international networks — conveying all manner of news, commentary and background information — will raise the problem to the level of major international concern.

International copyright conventions should be thoroughly re-examined. Authors and publishers — print, broadcast and electronic — must be protected against plagiarism and financial theft. At the same time, others near and far should be able to examine these works for their own information, and to advance their intellectual efforts. The balancing of these two rights will be difficult. As the age of ISDN provides unparalleled opportunities for mass education and mass communication, the copyright system must balance the rights of creators and users.

Remote sensing

Critics in some developing countries regard remote sensing of their lands by foreigners using a satellite as similar to copyright infringement of intellectual properties. Remote sensing by satellite can reveal a country's terrain, underground deposits, agricultural potential, industrial establishments, population concentration, housing structures, ships, traffic patterns and many other details formerly kept behind fences or in closed areas. National 'privacy' — some call it national sovereignty — can be 'invaded'.

Yet the United States Government early offered its satellite sensing photographs for commercial sale at low rates. Other countries have gone into the business. China used remote sensing in 1987 to determine where to place an electric power station on the Hongshui River. China has also used remote sensing for flood control and fire-fighting. Remote sensing also played a major role in arms control. Since 1972 every US–USSR strategic arms control agreement has included provision for spy satellites to verify the terms of the accords. Indeed, interference with the National Technical Means of Verification (NTV) was specifically banned in the agreements themselves. Spy satellites have significantly reduced international tensions. One American sensing satellite — LANDSAT — has monitored forest fires and other environmental crises. The system in seventeen years collected far more data than can be analyzed or even archived at present costs. As the world becomes ever more conscious of global environmental problems, the eye-in-the-sky can be a great boon. The lenses are being improved to provide greater magnification. At one metre resolution, for example, it is possible to read the markings on a house, while seeing that object in a picture covering a thousand square miles.

As such photos become available at low cost to everyone, and not just governments, one may expect wider use of satellite reconnaissance by journalists. This raises questions not only of national privacy, but personal and corporate privacy as well. Remote sensing can place an individual in a setting in which he/she would rather not be discovered. How is privacy to be protected while the new technology is allowed to provide the advantages it offers? A satellite photo of naval movements, published by a journalist, can raise real questions of geopolitics or be merely an embarrassing foray in irresponsible journalism. Remote sensing of a distant land as part of press coverage can reveal a secret corporate exploration which would be of great value to commercial competitors. News organizations using satellite photos first revealed that the Krasnoyarsk facility in the Soviet Union was a clear violation of the ABM Treaty. Much later, Soviet officials acknowledged the violation and removed it. The United States is trying to deny the press unlimited access to satellite photographs. A United States law enables the government to seize photos that violate security rules. The Supreme Court will decide. Yet the issue has to be faced by all countries and international systems. The advantages of remote sensing should be preserved by establishing appropriate 'ground rules' for spy-in-the-sky photography.

Satellite broadcasting

There are no new copyright or regulatory problems inherent in the present system of fixed satellite services (FSS) to prearranged cable carriers or radio broadcast. But direct broadcasting service (DBS) using signals from geostationary satellites raises new copyright questions. DBS is a service from the transmitting station direct to the individual receiver in a private home or office. Clearly the question of proprietary rights in DBS has yet to be resolved. There is an inherent technical problem in approaching the legal status of DBS messages. The message moves in two parts: the uplink from the earth station to the satellite does not necessarily match the description of a broadcast intended for the public; the downlink meets that definition. If a message is not intended for public reception it may not be covered by present copyright conventions. Transmission of such messages would not be a copyright infringement, though reception of the downlink without proper payment to the copyright holder would be. This is one of several threats by DBS to copyright ownership.

The 'small' communication technologies

Some new implements of communication are miniaturized yet can be operated as part of ISDN. This networking of networks will use fibre optics, glass cables employing digital signals to carry simultaneously many times more messages than there are copper wires. Or these small instruments can be freed of ground connections altogether. They use radio and, if needed, satellites to tap into switching centres that connect all manner of telephonic, computer and other receivers and transmitters. These small devices may be cellular telephones, wristwatch pagers and eventually wristwatch telephones connecting with any phone anywhere in the world.

The independence of these devices provides an obvious value for individuals, especially journalists who want to secure or transmit information without going through governmental or other control points. Emigré journalists from Panama and China used fax regularly to send compatriots at home reports and commentary not available in their own lands. Before Manuel Noriega was overthrown in 1989, Panamanians in Georgia and Florida sent daily reports by fax to pro-democracy contacts in Panama. Chinese journalists and students in the US after the 1989 crackdown at Tiananmen Square informed their supporters in several countries of the numbers of 6,000 telephones equipped with fax receivers in China. A steady flow of faxed reports was sent to China. Other Chinese journalists in the United States published the *Press Freedom Herald*, a four-page underground newspaper in the Chinese language. Many of the paper's 55,000 copies were sent by fax or regular mail to China.

Some journalists are already using transportable earth stations. These can be carried by several persons and, when assembled, transmit directly to a satellite for relaying to distant places. Just before the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, American television journalists used a particular Intelsat satellite that had been directed to receive uplinks directly from Beijing. One news organization brought video facilities capable of instantaneous digital transmission to New York for telephone, fax and computer equipment. These links carried the dramatic pictures and words of the clashes in Tiananmen Square. Other small modems already in use will enable journalists to link their instruments to a telephone anywhere in the world and send or receive information to or from the home office a satellite's distance away. Such technologies are levellers. Once on-line, every place in the world is equidistant, none is too far — all are several seconds away, the time it takes to complete a satellite up- and down-link.

The cost of the equipment and the fee for using the satellite are, however, self-selecting hurdles for many countries and their citizens. The financial history suggests, however, eventual accessibility to these communication technologies in all nations. The cost of the instruments and users' fees drop substantially with each new invention. The size and intricacy of the hardware is also steadily reduced. Standardization is the key to mass use of these instruments and their compatibility with the large networks. This is now being addressed to empower diverse digitalized services over ISDN. Businesses in the United States will soon have 'broadband' ISDN that can provide speed of operation a thousand times faster. The dropping of costs can be noted not only in the wide use of personal computers which now do the work that large mainframe machines managed fifteen years ago, but also in the sudden proliferation of electronic facsimile transmission (fax). In less than ten years, fax has increased its delivery speed by fifty times, improved its delivery system, decreased its cost markedly, and become virtually a business necessity in Western Europe and the US.

Problems for regulators

Electronic bulletin boards, as with fax, would appear at first sight to be purely beneficial. But as with the printed or spoken word they can be carriers of libel, pornography or pure fraud. Electronic bulletin boards enable persons with a personal computer and a modem to contact other users and especially large informational archives and networks. There have been several notorious misuses of this facility. Computer hackers in the US and Europe have invaded large networks to confuse the central computer, steal vital information and, worse still, order the archival computer to destroy or alter data bases. Such criminal activity, whether undertaken for political or financial gain, can wreak havoc in computerized data systems.

Regulators aware of these risks must insure that self-protective codes are maintained in networks and archival systems. Regulators will also have to mediate between: unregulated information-processing industries and regulated telephone systems; regulated cable systems and regulated television systems; regulated telephone systems and unregulated newspapers and magazines; over-air broadcasters and cable systems; cable and telephone industries eventually using fibre-optic lines to carry video programmes; different developers of high-definition television (HDTV) using one of several standards to produce far clearer pictures for many uses beyond TV entertainment — indeed, HDTV may become a diversified multi-billion dollar industry.

It is already clear that technological development in the field of communications is moving faster than regulators can act. It is far easier to cite the present and potential conflicts of rights and interests than to provide equitable recommendations in advance. Several guidelines, however, can be set down:

1. The new communication technologies should be treated by all governments as vital instruments of free expression, and the free flow of their content protected from governmental control.
2. As soon as possible, all the new technologies should be standardized so that everyone, everywhere can have equal access to the networks and the archival content.
3. Regulatory supervision may be needed to enhance the diversity of content by preventing the monopolization of communication systems by governments or entrepreneurs, and encouraging competition among diverse systems.
4. International communication systems should not be regulated as commercial trade-offs (e.g. under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade — GATT), but rather as channels of free expression, a basic human right.
5. Developed nations should acknowledge the long-term value to all countries of assisting poorer nations to build communication infrastructures that will enable them to join the global networks. The conflict between nations regarded as suppliers and others intent on building their own infrastructure should be quelled in international regulatory and development-aid forums. Third World countries should be encouraged, for example, to use digital systems and fibre optics in order to leapfrog the older, more expensive communication systems.
6. Protective rules should be enforced globally to defend intellectual creators against pirating of their products.
7. Transborder data flows — essential to all peoples everywhere — should not be regarded either as an unlimited instrument for the defence of national sovereignty or commercial property, or as an unlimited channel for the transfer of data of a personal nature from one country to another.
8. Earnest efforts should be made by developed countries to help Third World nations enhance their human and technological capacities for the Age of ISDN.

Deregulation of telecommunications

The central premise of recent decisions by the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been to reduce national and international regulation. FCC sought to enable users and carriers to allow market needs to govern the use of the facilities as much as possible. FCC's deregulatory actions influence international development. Its divisions have liberalized other countries' access to Intelsat, the US-created satellite system now governed cooperatively by more than one hundred nations. Such decisions have supported competition in international satellite services. Private companies may now compete with Comsat, the US-sponsored launching firm. West European countries are also engaged in liberalizing telecommunication systems and moving away from monopoly control.

These and other issues are debated at the key international regulatory agency, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The tendency in many countries, increasingly, is to trade telecommunication services in GATT. Protectionism may be motivated by potential profit or a desire to prevent the erosion of cultural identity. For whatever reason, protectionism hinders the free flow of information and limits the diversity of ideas available to the public. The coming Age of ISDN will make such trade-offs unnecessary. The citizen will be within relatively easy reach of a public terminal linked to diverse informational resources. Cultural products from even the most remote places and tiniest populations will be available world-wide. This will be the ultimate advantage of well-integrated telecommunications.

Towards the future

Several countries in Central Europe began to reorganize their governments and societies along democratic lines early in 1990. They created pluralistic political structures and encouraged various newspapers, magazines and broadcasters to replace the former state-run press, news agency, radio and television systems. Works of writers and dramatists which could only circulate underground for many years were suddenly available in public kiosks and mainline theatres. A play by Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia, was presented in Prague sixteen years after it was written (though the present writer had seen it in New York years before).

The traditional news and information channels now employ the new communication technologies: cable television, video and audio cassettes, fax, copiers, computers and electronic publications. It will assuredly take some years before these new instruments are used as prolifically in the developing countries as in the industrialized states of Western Europe, North America and Japan. These 'small' technologies, and others such as cellular telephones and modems for linking computers telephonically, initially ensure the diversity of ideas flowing over the pluralistic carriers. That combination, in turn, supports the eventual spread of political systems which encourage the pluralism of the new communication technologies. Such encouragement does not necessarily guarantee the preservation of existing nation-states in their present form or borders. The new openness in countries could provide the channels over which to debate traditional claims for ethnic or national self-determination. The outcome of such claims, long delayed by the political freeze of the Cold War, could generate tensions in Central Europe not seen since the early twentieth century.

These crises could persist well into the new millennium. The new pluralistic technologies of communication, however, would, one earnestly hopes, provide a far freer expression of peoples at cross purposes, and a more peaceful mode of rationalizing diverse claims; not, as in the past, relying on secret agreements, secretly made and falsely propagandized until guns and tanks 'settled' accounts which are still unresolved nearly a century later.

For, as Mikhail Gorbachev told the Lithuanians at a meeting of Communist Party dissidents in January 1990, 'It is politics that follows economics, and not vice versa'. He concluded (while pleading to avoid secession from the Soviet Union) that 'everything is determined, comrades, by ... public opinion, public movements that are capable of accumulating and expressing and making known public interests.... Everything should be determined by the political process.'

The new communication instruments provide a technology of freedom which, in turn, drives policy. And political will, informed by these communication tools, is needed to ensure that democratic regulators do not again become censors.[13]

Notes

1. Leonard R. Sussman *Power, the Press and the Technology of Freedom: The Coming Age of ISDN*, Chapter VII, New York, Freedom House, 1989.
2. See L. R. Sussman. 'Journalism Morbidity Table — 1989,' in 'Shock Waves of a Freer Press'. *Freedom at Issue*, January-February 1990. The table was compiled with the assistance of Jessie Miller.
3. The Associated Press, W1441, 30 November 1989.
4. William Echikson. *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 December 1989, p. 6.
5. Ibid.
6. The Associated Press, W0263, 18 December 1989.
7. Henry Kamm. *New York Times*, 2 December 1989.
8. Henry Kamm. *New York Times*, 20 September 1989.
9. This writer first urged the creation of a Helsinki Watch in September 1975, the month after the Final Act was signed. Watch groups were created in the USSR in 1976. The US Helsinki Watch Committee was formed in 1979. The International Helsinki Federation of Human Rights was established in 1982.
10. See Priscilla Regan. 'From Paper Dossiers to Electronic Dossiers: Gaps in the Privacy Act of 1974'. In *Technology and People* 3, pp. 279–296. Washington, Office of Technology Assessment, 1988.
11. See 'Developments in Communication', in *World Communication Report*, Pt. 1, pp. 3.8–3.9, Paris, UNESCO, 1989.
12. The Associated Press, W0230, 13 October 1989.
13. For a fuller discussion of the varied uses of the new communication technologies as a democratizing factor, see the author's *Power, the Press and the Technology of Freedom...*, op. cit.

Impact of new information and communication technologies on information diversity in North America and Western Europe

Nicholas Garnham

The forces present

All democrats can agree that the practice of democracy rests upon the ability of citizens to have access to the widest possible range of information and to freely articulate and receive the widest possible range of opinions. The problem is how best to achieve that desirable goal and on that issue there remains a deep division of opinion.

Indeed in the 1970s and early 1980s UNESCO tore itself apart and was nearly destroyed by a struggle between the proponents of Free Flow of Information and those of a New World Information Order. The former placed the emphasis on negative freedoms of communication, saw the main problem as one of state control and argued for an unregulated global market in communication goods and services. Regulation was abominated as totalitarian, and absence of regulation was seen as a sign of democratic health. The proponents of the New World Information Order on the other hand stressed positive freedoms, saw the main problem as being one of unequal economic and political power and thus argued for state regulation as the indispensable means of ensuring equality of information access and expression.

Under the pressure of the wider geopolitical context of East-West and North-South conflicts this debate generated more heat than light as both parties exaggerated the polarities of their positions. The proponents of Free Flow adopted an extreme laissez-faire position, disregarding the problems of market failure and the differences between utility and justice. The proponents of the New World Information Order too often turned a blind eye to the mobilization of their arguments in favour of national sovereignty and cultural autonomy in defense of manifestly undemocratic regimes, flagrant abuses of human rights and obscurantist cultural movements.

It would appear that the proponents of Free Flow have comprehensively won the argument. Indeed in the light of recent changes within what was the Soviet block and the ascendancy of neo-liberal, de-regulatory politics in North America and Western Europe, we are in danger of witnessing a triumphalist, 'end of history' version of the free flow argument dominate the communication policy debate. It is for that reason that this essay is concerned to challenge this new orthodoxy and to restate the argument for positive communication freedoms as an essential foundation for democracy and for regulation as the unavoidable means of attaining those ends. In particular it is my purpose to challenge that contemporary Whig version of the argument for the deregulation of communications as the path to democracy, which sees that path as historically inevitable and technologically determined. In short the argument most cogently and influentially expressed by Ithiel de Sola Pool who holds that the new Information and Communication Technologies are technologies of freedom and that regulations which inhibit their application are barriers to progress erected by existing holders of communication and information power and defended by them to sustain their monopoly of that power.

A fallacious line of reasoning

Before explaining what is wrong with this widely influential argument it is necessary to outline its structure. It combines the following elements. It takes printing as its model and in so doing makes a beneficent link between technological determinism and the free market. It argues that the invention of printing, by making it possible to produce and distribute written texts cheaply and in large numbers, linked to the creation of a merchant class with both the capital and incentive to exploit this technological capability by creating a print market, undermined the power of the absolutist feudal monarchies and the Church to control information flows and thus ushered in the Enlightenment and liberal democracies. The heroes of this historical transition are printer/publisher entrepreneurs fighting against royal and religious absolutism for the right to publish free of authoritarian control. The problem with the argument in its subsequent history is that this complex moment of historical transition, characterized by artisanal, small-scale, non-capital-intensive production, distribution to a relatively restricted reading public by foot, pack-animal or carriage, within a context of competitive merchant capital, is frozen, a freezing symbolized by the First Amendment to the American Constitution, and then used as the model for all future developments. From this perspective latter developments in broadcasting and telecommunications are seen as temporary aberrations. In so far as state regulation is accepted it is only because technical characteristics, in broadcasting spectrum scarcity and, in telecommunications, the economies of scale that stem from the large fixed and sunk costs of a switched network, necessitate regulatory intervention in the public interest to redress potential market distortion, in particular limitations on market entry.

From such a position it can then be argued that new communication and information technologies, by removing spectrum scarcity in broadcasting and undercutting the network as natural monopoly argument in telecommunications, call for de-regulation and the expansion of the press to cover the whole information and communication sphere. It is further argued, ironically in a version of Marxist economic determinism, that so powerful are the economic forces unleashed by these new technological potentials that no government can stand in their way for long; that the market demand for the increased choice made available will override any countervailing political pressures, and that the barons of the existing communication regimes will be swept away by electronics as surely and inevitably as the feudal barons were by print.

Censorship in a new garb

The weaknesses of this argument lies in its technological determinism and in its failure, in focusing on the problem of state censorship, to see the problem of market censorship.

The problem with the technological determinist argument is that it overlooks the fact that technological developments are themselves shaped by the prevailing structures of economic, political and cultural power and more importantly that they offer a range of potentials which will only be actualized by the prevailing structure. Thus to take a simple and well-known example that goes to the heart of the free press argument, printing with movable type was in fact invented in China long before it was in Europe, but the prevailing social system meant that it was never developed as a Technology of Freedom.

But a more fundamental weakness of the argument is its failure to recognize that in developed societies characterized by spatial extension and a complex division of labour all communication is necessarily mediated. It requires the mobilization of production apparatuses and distribution infrastructures: thus positive freedom of communication requires access to scarce material resources. In capitalist-market-based societies such resources take the form of capital to which access is very unevenly distributed. Moreover once one moves out of the face-to-face communication situation, the relation between production and consumption, between sender and receiver, is inevitably hierarchically organized, i.e. is a relationship of one to many very different from the dialogic situation of face-to-face communication. A major problem with the negative freedom model of free communication is its unadmitted nostalgia for unmediated communication. The underlying model of communication and its relationship to democracy is taken from that of the agora in the Greek polis where all participants shared both the necessary means of communication—natural language—and a situation of social equality. This is by definition not the situation we face in contemporary societies and with contemporary representative politics.

This neglect of positive freedom also leads to a crucial neglect of the problem of the acquisition of the competences necessary to the effective exercise of communicative freedom, competences still largely inculcated within the social and cultural milieu of the home and within the formal education system. Literacy is, of course, the most obvious of such competences, but the increased stress within education on the acquisition of a range of so-called communication skills attests to the fact that we do not come into the world innately equipped with the means to exploit the mediated communicative opportunities open to us. The acquisition of these competences, as with other social skills, is unequally distributed in our societies along lines of class, gender and ethnicity. Moreover the existence of these relatively scarce skills means that much communicative power in our societies is exercised by professional élites who monopolize these skills and use that monopoly to further their own specific interests, the pursuit of which may not necessarily optimize communicative freedom for all.

Thus if communication is left to the capitalist market, it will be economics that will determine the range of information and communicative opportunities made available to citizens, and not technology. It is of course true that technology will change market structure by shifting relative costs and creating new substitute or partially substitute communication and information products and services. The question is whether these changes are sufficiently large to outweigh the fundamental dynamics of the market and radically change market structures. In terms of pluralism and diversity these shifts are often ambiguous. Did the partial substitution of TV for cinema in the field of narrative audio-visual entertainment significantly increase diversity or did it merely shift the power of control over the flow of very similar material from film distribution companies to TV networks? The video cassette recorder (VCR) does indeed increase the consumer's control over the time and place of consumption and in principle offers the possibility of distribution channels outside the control of major film exhibition chains and TV networks. But in practice it is difficult to argue that it has significantly increased the diversity of material viewed, or broken down the concentration of power over the production and distribution of audio-visual entertainment world-wide.

As Habermas has cogently argued in his account of the rise and fall of the Public Sphere, the free-press model mistakes an ideal for reality and opposes a caricatured market to a caricatured state rather than seeing the real historical development of both as two sides of the same coin. In brief Habermas's argument is that the eighteenth century moment from which free-press doctrine sprang witnessed the development of a Public Sphere within which public opinion could be formed as a source of the legitimate goals of political action (the definition of public interest) and as a critical check upon representative government. This Public Sphere — and this is crucial — was independent of both market and state. Its independence from the state did indeed rest upon its economic independence. The communicative institutions of the Public Sphere — newspapers, libraries, debating societies, universities, etc. — could be funded out of the private economic resources of its participants without recourse to state support. On the other hand it was independent of the exercise of economic market power because of the low level of capitalization required and because all participants were of roughly equal wealth. This balance which was the necessary foundation for the possibilities for communicative interaction undistorted by either political or economic power, and thus for the free exchange of information and opinions in rational debate, was destroyed and the space between market and state within which the Public Sphere existed closed up by developments in both economy and state. The economy witnessed concentration of economic power and the increasing dependence of the media of communication upon advertising finance and thus upon blatant narrow economic interest. In response the state developed into the modern Welfare State grounded in ideologically defined party politics with its own informational interests and exercising increasingly wide communicative power. Here the rise of state advertising expenditure and the creation of an increasingly central apparatus of government information manipulation paralleled by the fighting of party political struggles through advertising are symptomatic.

Shifting focii of information management

If we examine the impact of new information and communication technologies we see nothing that would lead us to believe that they are significantly counteracting these trends towards high levels of economic concentration in the communication industries and to growing levels of information management by the state and other élite groups.

In examining this impact we need to distinguish between technologies of information production and those of distribution if only because the free press model places its emphasis on production — on the printing press as archetype — rather than on distribution where in fact the main impact of new technologies and of associated deregulation is felt.

Newspapers: a narrowing corridor

Let us look firstly at production and at the heartland of the free press argument, namely newspapers. It has been argued that new printing technologies have lowered the cost base of newspaper production and so made it possible to solve the problem of press concentration that has so embarrassed the advocates of press freedom, since market dynamics were so clearly and inexorably reducing press diversity. If we take the United Kingdom as an example, the much-trumpeted Wapping revolution by which Murdoch broke the power of the printing trade-unions by shifting his newspapers to all-computerized production has indeed lowered his wage costs and so boosted his profits. But the number of titles has not significantly increased and concentration of newspaper ownership has increased. Indeed the original independent pioneer of the all-computerized newspaper in the United Kingdom, Eddie Shah's *Today*, had finally to be rescued by Murdoch himself, although its future still remains cloudy. With the exception of the *Independent*, all other attempts at launching new papers into the UK market have failed. This is not surprising since the production labour costs remain a relatively low percentage of total costs and the necessary capital base for a national newspaper remains high. Nor has technology stopped the drift of the mass circulation press into apolitical trivia and an intense competition for a narrow range of similar stories based upon scandal and show-business gossip which restricts information pluralism within even narrower bounds.

Where new technology is beginning to have a significant effect upon the newspaper market is with the application of satellite-based remote printing. This is reinforcing concentration of control, not only nationally, e.g. *USA Today*, but also internationally, e.g. the *Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The basic economics of newspapers in a competitive free market leads, because of high first-copy costs and low marginal costs, to readership maximization within any given market segment. Technology is now facilitating the spread of this development to ever wider geographical markets.

Such developments are not incompatible with one offshoot of diversity — greater market segmentation. Computerization is enabling newspapers, particularly in the United States — where the local newspaper market has long been monopolized and national newspapers were unknown, until the advent of *USA Today* — to optimize advertising sales by internationally resegmenting the readership and by a process of flexible specialization producing mini editions tailored to differed geographical areas or advertising market segments. But this is not pluralism for the reader. The choice is predetermined within the sales department of the newspaper and, by a process of targeting, the reader is likely to receive a narrower range of material, even if it is one closer to his or her own interests as perceived by the newspaper.

Computer-based information servicing

Nor can it be argued, I think, as many radicals have tried, that this does not matter because the era of mass newspapers and of print is being superseded by specialized, interactive, computer-based information services. It must be clear that the number of those with the time, money and acquired skills to access such services is minute, even in societies with high levels of per capita income and technological awareness such as the United States. None of the industry projections of growth for such information services have been met and a whole mini-industry of consultants is trying to explain why. As with educational broadcasting, the next marketing push or technological breakthrough is always going to deliver the promise that is indefinitely postponed. The fact is that the construction and marketing of such data-base services is capita- and skill-intensive, so that control of the market is even more concentrated internationally than that of newspapers. Moreover successful usage of such services also requires investments of time, skill and money that only professional and commercial users can justify. Thus the impact of on-line information services, far from democratizing information, has actually been to widen the gap between information rich and information poor. One classic example of this is the way that public libraries have been forced to cut back on book purchases in order to switch their resources towards the provision of electronic services to a narrow and already privileged range of users.

Because the computer has made it possible to commoditize units of information efficiently as never before, the value of that information is then enhanced by pricing-strategies designed to maximize the value that results from information scarcity.

But it is in information distribution that the claims for the liberating impacts of new technologies fail most dismally. Distribution holds the key to information plurality and to the economics of the media, since it is not the production of a message that counts but rather its access to an audience or access to it by an audience. Again we need to beware of the baleful influence of the face-to-face model where the relation to an audience is given and the relation between sender and receiver is not necessarily hierarchical.

Distribution the key

Distribution is the economic key to the media for three reasons. The value of much information is time-dependent and audience consumption time is necessarily limited; thus competition for a given slice of audience attention time will be intense. Control over a secure distribution channel gives privileged access to that attention time. Because of the high returns to economies of scale in industries where the costs of reproduction are low in relation to initial production costs, the search for audience maximization will always play an important role. Here too distribution is the key. Because of the inherent market risks stemming from the uncertainty of demand for any single information product, which is by definition a novelty — thus the high percentage of failures to successes — successful and sustained operation in the media sector requires the ability to deliver a range of products to the audience and to balance the profits and losses across the whole range. This requires assured distribution access.

The development of new and rival distribution technologies in the audio-visual field — cable, satellite and VCRs — far from being used as the basis for a wider range of competitive content, has encouraged concentration across technologically rival distribution channels, not only through cross-ownership where regulations allow, but through the marketing of the same product range across all distribution channels in a carefully planned cascade, e.g. from cinema release to cable and VCR release to network TV, to direct satellite TV and to TV syndication. It would be foolish to deny that the decline of the American TV networks and the rise of cable and VCRs have somewhat widened viewer choice, in particular by freeing the viewer from the time straitjacket represented by classic network scheduling, so that sports lovers can now watch sport all the time, newsfreaks news at any time they choose, or indeed soap-opera junkies soap operas round the clock. But the range of programming has changed little and there has been a rapid process of consolidation in the United States cable industry, with high levels of concentration in cable system ownership and in cross ownership between systems and programme services.

Trend towards shrinkage

The trend in Western Europe is even more clearly away from diversity. Cable and satellites have not yet had a significant impact in most of Western Europe. Cable only has extensive penetration in small countries, such as Holland and Belgium, whose viewers can benefit from the importation of signals from larger neighbouring countries whose public TV systems, simply as a function of size, can afford higher production budgets than those of the domestic system. Thus viewers in such small countries receive greater diversity when it is cross subsidized by richer neighbours. While only in Sweden and Denmark can it be claimed that the existence of satellite services led to the introduction of commercial broadcasting, the existence of these new distribution systems has been widely used by policy makers as an argument for what is presented as the inexorable de-regulation of broadcasting and an accompanying shift from regulated public service to more lightly regulated commercial broadcasting. This move is legitimized on the grounds that these new technologies abolish spectrum scarcity which is in its turn seen as the only possible justification for the regulation of broadcasting. The classic example to date is the United Kingdom where the Peacock Committee based its arguments for de-regulation on the desirability and the approaching technical possibility of shifting to what it described as a publishing model for the broadcasting market based on the unregulated delivery of Pay TV via a universal common carriage broadband cable system.

Thus the major impact of these new technologies in Europe to date has been as a potential threat mobilized by aspirant broadcasting entrepreneurs and neo-liberal politicians to reinforce wider deregulatory trends and consequent increased commercialization of broadcasting. This has important side effects.

Firstly, research shows that competitive, advertising-financed systems tend to compete for the centre ground of taste. Because they are selling audiences on the basis of cost per thousand they need to maximize audiences rather than planning programming on the basis of the intensity of viewer satisfaction across a range of different audiences. Thus they tend to deliver a lower level of programme diversity than mandated public service systems. Certainly studies of the programming of European satellite-delivered services show a high proportion of entertainment programming in comparison with national public service systems.

Secondly, the introduction of competition allied to an unavoidable rise in programme costs world-wide, in part fuelled by competition for a limited programme stock and pool of production talent from a growing number of competing distribution systems, has led to a stress on internationally marketable programme forms and on co-production at the expense of original indigenous programming.

Thirdly, competition has been accompanied by a move away from relatively secure, vertically integrated public service broadcasting production units with the ability to plan long-term and take risks towards reliance on the so-called independent sector of small freelance production companies. Such companies cannot afford high risk productions, are highly vulnerable to business and political pressure and, because the home market is often not large enough to sustain the cost of production, are forced to operate on the international market with all the compromises that inevitably entails.

Fourthly, intensifying competition for advertising revenue is leading to the growth of forms of finance such as sponsorship, bartering and product placement that undercut the editorial and creative independence of programme makers and subordinate the information and entertainment needs of audiences to those of a small number of corporations.

Against this background, broadcasting control is falling into fewer rather than more hands with the formation of international conglomerates such as Fininvest, RTL or News International operating across a number of national broadcasting markets and producing programming as well as selling advertising across those markets.

Telecommunications — not just a boon

Let me now turn to telecommunications. Telecommunications networks are often seen as the nervous system of the so-called information society. Thinkers such as Daniel Bell and Toffler have argued that the convergence of computing and telecommunications by massively reducing the costs of information storage, manipulation and delivery are helping us to move away from a society characterized by the massification and concentration of social and economic power associated with the need to concentrate energy on the manipulation of materials to a human-centred, de-massified utopia based upon the creation of knowledge through the manipulation of information. Since this process would be detached from the constraints of locality and freed from the need to exploit nature, it would be a world such as Marx envisaged where, freed from necessity in a world of abundance, humans could pursue their creative fulfilment constrained only by the limits of their imaginations.

It is clear that this vision bears little relation to contemporary reality. None the less the progressive introduction of digital forms of information manipulation storage and transmission has meant a progressive weakening of the technical barriers between distinct media systems based on their own production and distribution technologies. Increasingly a message or symbol, whether a picture, sound, word, number or any combination of these, can be coded in a common form, manipulated and stored in a common data base and then transmitted and switched to a multitude of different recipients, whether in a group or singly, as part of the same bit-stream, and whether over a fibre-optic cable or a radio channel. Thus whether or not we accept the Information Society dream, it is clear that access to available information will increasingly be via digital telecommunication networks; how those networks are provided and controlled will determine the extent of information diversity available to the average citizen.

Diversity, yes...

The question we face is one of knowing what impact those developments are likely to have on information diversity. In particular, we have to ask whether technical developments are leading to a unified network, and if so who will control access to that network and under what terms. Or alternatively, we have to know whether the unified network is fragmenting into a plethora of competing networks. Those who argue for a technologically determined development path to greater expressive and communicative freedom assert that the barriers to that freedom lie in the cost and inflexibility of transmission media. They maintain that, during the development of switched telephony, the technical characteristics of the network — expensive low-capacity copper cables, the need for many repeaters, the high cost and low capacity of human, and, later, mechanical switching — meant that the priority for network planners was to maximize shared use of these massive sunk and fixed costs. In such a situation it made little sense to build two competitive networks; system expansion could be optimized, bringing benefits to all users, through a system of cross subsidy that came to be known as the principle of universal service — universal right of access to the one network at a standard charge. This system, which was considered to be a natural monopoly, then required regulation in the public interest. In the United States, the task of operation was handed over to a private entity, i.e. AT&T, regulated by FCC. In Europe the task was taken on directly by the state. Internationally, the technical system co-ordination necessary for interworking relations between national systems was regulated by ITU. This system was remarkably successful in eventually achieving universal global direct dialling and high levels of telephone penetration in the developed world.

It is now argued, however, that this system should be dismantled in a process known as de-regulation because technology has provided alternative, competitive transmission technologies, while at the same time software-based electronic switching has opened up the possibility of a wide range of new information services the innovation of which will only be encouraged by the creation of a competitive market.

... But not for all

There are a number of problems with this scenario. Firstly, the tariff-rebalancing forced on network operators by competition poses a serious threat to universal service provision according as poorer subscribers are priced off the network. Secondly, the new information services and the broadband networks over which they will be broadcast are not likely to be developed on a universal service basis within a competitive regime. The problem posed for the world's major telecommunication operators is that telecommunications usage is highly concentrated. Typical 80 per cent of revenues and nearer 100 per cent of profits are generated from a few hundred major corporate customers. In an unregulated competitive market there is little incentive to provide the rest of the customer base with new services. Moreover, those profitable customers are located in a very small geographical area world-wide — the downtown areas of a few major financial centres, perhaps 60 square miles of the globe's surface. With modern satellite technology and fibre optics, these centres and customers can be efficiently linked without the expense of building a network for anyone else and the intelligent switching, the source of the information services, can control the network and the services run over it from one global control centre. The problem is that most people, even in developed countries, live outside this charmed circle.

It should be remembered that the sole example of the widespread dissemination to domestic subscribers of information services, the French Minitel, has been dependant upon a public policy decision to provide subsidized terminals, on the provision of universally tariffed access to a public packet-switched network and to a monopoly operator taking on the business of billing for all information providers via the so-called kiosk system. The technology of videotext alone without such institutional support has not been sufficient elsewhere in the world to generate widespread access to information services.

It is now being argued, in the context of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World, that development requires provision of access for business purposes to an advanced telecommunications infrastructure. The problem is that provision of a classic fixed-link network is capital-intensive, requires long planning lead times, and is optimized by monopoly management. The answer to this problem is then claimed to be the use of cellular and VSAT technology allowing one to access high value users without the need for the creation of an elaborate fixed network. The difficulty with this scenario is that where cellular technology has successfully developed, such as in Scandinavia and the United Kingdom, it is parasitic on an already existing fixed network in order to link its cells. The exploitation of satellite links will tend to create privileged islands of provision with no guarantee that revenues will be used to spread network access to the generality of the population.

Limits of new technologies

In short I have been arguing that new technologies of information and communication do not themselves provide liberation or greater information diversity because they are introduced within specific economic and political regimes which determine how they are used. In particular if the promise of new technologies is used to undermine those regulatory regimes of public service in broadcasting and universal service in telecommunications that ensure, against the grain of the market, that information diversity and access are maximized, then they are likely to lead to a reduction of information diversity for the average citizen.

Certainly, in spite of new technologies, there is widespread evidence in the democratic, free-market societies of Western Europe and North America that the control and manipulation of information in their own interests by major power holders, whether in government or corporations, is on the increase and that technology gives the citizen little protection against this process. Rather the contrary. Computerized mailing lists and electronic monitoring on cable TV and telecommunications networks and at point-of-sale terminals of patterns of consumption are thrusting ever-greater information power into the hands of those same major power holders who possess the economic resources to capture and make use of these information flows.

I cannot do better than conclude by quoting from 'Critical Communications', a recent report of the United States Office of Technology Assessment:

> Where markets dominate the allocation of communication resources — such as information, a speaking platform, or access to an audience — political access may become increasingly dependant on the ability to pay. Thus economic divisions among individuals and groups may be super-imposed on the political arena.

The same report goes on to argue that:

> Changes in the US communication infrastructure are likely to broaden the gap between those who can access communication services and use information strategically and those who cannot. Moreover the people most likely to be adversely affected are those whom the new communication technologies could help the most — the poor, the educationally disadvantaged, the geographically and technologically isolated and the struggling small- and medium-sized business.

The impact of electronic mass media in Sweden

Charly Hultén

Background

The Audience and Programme Research Department of Sveriges Radio (SR/PUB) has conducted nationally representative surveys of media consumption in Sweden since 1969. Naturally, much of our work focuses on radio and television and, more recently, video and satellite/cable distribution of broadcast signals. In addition, however, since 1979 we have monitored consumption of ten different media — television, radio, newspapers (full-sized and tabloids), books, magazines, journals, gramophone and cassette recordings, and video — on an annual basis in order to trace longitudinal trends. Consumption is measured in terms of the numbers of persons attending the respective media, 'the average day' and the time devoted to each. These serial data are published annually in SR/PUB's *Media Barometer*.[1]

In 1983, we started a second series, the *Barometer of Cultural Activity*, which focuses on some twenty non-medial activities.[2] Typical activities monitored in this series of surveys include film-making/photography, correspondence, keeping a diary/writing poetry, dancing, woodworking/carpentry, knitting/sewing/weaving, collecting (stamps, coins, etc.), playing a musical instrument, singing, attending adult education courses, visiting the theatre, visiting galleries and museums. Activities are measured in terms of the numbers of persons engaging in them and the frequency with which they do so.[3] Our purpose was to gather comparable longitudinal data that would allow us to gauge the impact of developments in the media sector on other leisure activity. Since 1983/84, data are cumulated and published every second year. These biannual reports are supplemented with in-depth analyses of each of the activities at five-year intervals.

From the outset the work of SR/PUB has been founded on the conviction that no evaluation of media policies or assessments of 'effects' can be valid unless they take account of actual consumption patterns. That premise has also guided this presentation.

Disposition

Before proceeding to our data, it might be well to say a few words about the limitations of the present article and the 'variables' to be discussed. The media to be considered are radio, television (incl. video and teletext) and cinema. In conclusion we shall briefly outline how consumption of these media relates to other leisure activities.

On the supply side, we shall consider the prevailing structure in the respective media in terms of distribution (availability) nationally and locally, the degree of *pluralism* (in respect of branch concentration, variety of sources, patterns of control, etc.) and *content*. Content will be discussed in terms of only two gross dichotomies: Swedish vs. foreign origin and fact (non-fiction) vs. fiction.

The patterns of supply/availability yield the framework for consumers' freedom of choice as well as the orientation of their media use. Consumption will be discussed in terms of actual use (i.e. demonstrated preferences).

The role, or impact, of new media technologies will be discussed in terms of (1) trends and changes in supply and consumption, respectively, and (2) changes in consumption relative to supply, as have been documented in SR/PUB research. Again, the discussion will principally focus on the dichotomies, Swedish/foreign and fact/fiction.

The reader will find a certain preoccupation with technologies of distribution or, alternatively phrased, a lack of attention to advances in the technologies of production. Thus, in the case of radio, for example, the article focuses on the channels available to listeners, but says little about revolutionary innovations like 'satellite feeds' and programme exchanges and newsroom data bases.

Finally, a couple of brief caveats regarding Sweden. On the map, Sweden is one of the larger European nations. To those not familiar with the Scandinavian peninsula, this may be highly misleading, so that readers may expect a population in perhaps the tens of millions. Sweden's roughly eight-and-one-half-million inhabitants are — what is more — unevenly distributed over the territory: according to the most recent census, 31 per cent live in and around the country's three metropoles, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Other Swedish towns are small, with only eleven municipalities[4] having populations of more than 100,000. Only 38 per cent live in the counties north of Stockholm and Lake Mälaren — which, however, make up fully 76 per cent of the country's total area. To say that Sweden is sparsely populated is, by most international comparisons, something of an understatement. Naturally, this circumstance strongly influences media economics and media structure.

Secondly, from the start broadcasting has been exercised by a non-commercial, publicly-owned monopoly dedicated to the principles of 'public service broadcasting' and bound (by statute) to observe strict standards of factuality and impartiality.[5] By contrast, most Swedish newspapers have explicit affiliation to one or other of the Parliamentary parties, in most cases one of the non-Socialist parties. The non-commercial nature of broadcasting in Sweden has influenced the character of content and popular attitudes toward radio and television (e.g. high credibility ratings), while it also means that print media have been virtually uncontested vehicles for advertising on both local and national markets.

Mass media in daily life in Sweden[6]

The penetration of most Swedish mass media is relatively high. International statistics show that per capita newspaper readership in Sweden is among the highest in the world.[7] Well over 90 per cent of Swedish households are equipped with television and radio. From the outset, broadcasting policy has followed the principle that all parts of the country, no matter how lightly populated, should have access to all domestic services. Nearly every second household has a video recorder (VCR); one household in five has access to one or more satellite television channels via cable. Swedes are avid readers of books. All 280 Swedish municipalities maintain one or more public libraries, and most of them offer

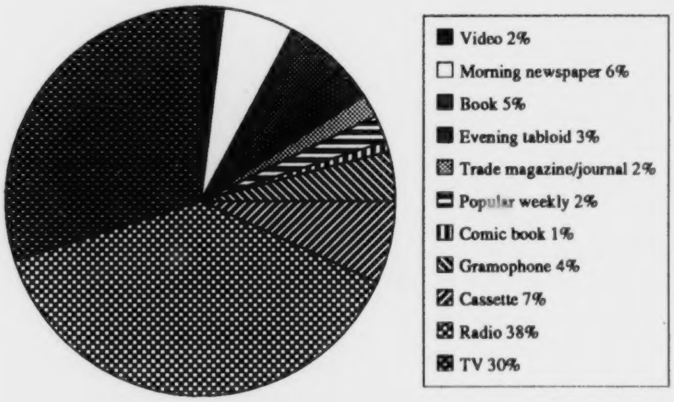


Fig. 1. Share of time spent with the respective media on average day, 1989 (per cent). Total media time: 5 h 45 min.

Source: Nordström, B. 1990. Mediebarometern 1989 [Media barometer 1989]. Stockholm: SR/PUB and Dagspresskollegiet, SR/PUB; 6.

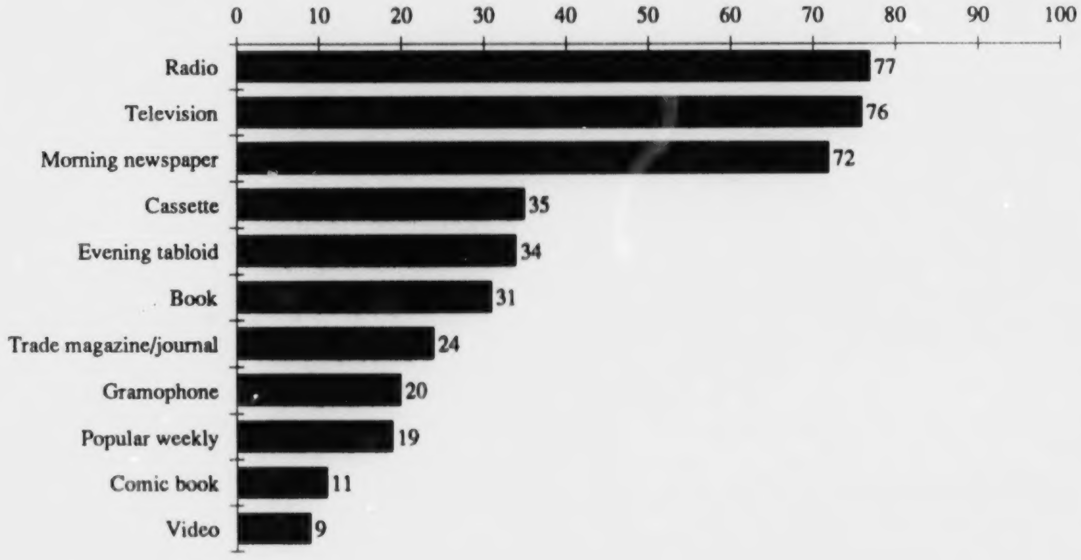


Fig. 2. Share of the population (aged 9–79) who use the respective media on average day, 1989 (per cent)

Source: Nordström, B. 1990. Mediebarometern 1989 [Media barometer 1989]. Stockholm: SR/PUB and Dagspresskollegiet, SR/PUB; 6.

mobile services to outlying districts. All are served by one or more bookshops, and most have at least one outlet that sells foreign and specialty periodicals. Swedes are also the 'heaviest' consumers of professional and organizational periodicals in the world (averaging more than three per person and per annum)[8]. The above diagrams above provide an overview of media usage in 1989.

Broadcasting

Until 1979 all broadcasting in Sweden was done under the auspices of a single publicly-owned corporation — AB Radiotjänst, subsequently Sveriges Radio — which was granted sole rights to the airwaves in 1925. With the exception of the overseas services of Radio Sweden all broadcasting under the provisions of the Radio Act is financed via revenues from fees levied on ownership of TV sets. The ownership structure of Sveriges Radio differs from that in most other countries: shares in the corporation are held by the 'popular movements' (60 per cent)[9], the newspaper industry (20 per cent) and Swedish industry (20 per cent).

Possession of receiving equipment is unrestricted in Swedish law, the only requirement being that owners of television sets pay the above-mentioned fee.

In 1979 the monopoly was broken with the introduction of neighbourhood or 'community access' radio stations operating on a strictly local basis, independent of Sveriges Radio. Sveriges Radio itself was restructured in 1978 to form a group company, having four subsidiary programme companies: Swedish National Radio, Swedish Television, Local Radio and Educational Broadcasting. Each subsidiary assumes full responsibility for its output.

Radio and television have been the most expansive of all Swedish media in recent decades. A second radio channel came on the air in 1955, to be joined by P3 in 1964. The greatest change in the entire media sector during this period has been the introduction of local radio services over 24 stations (serving one county each) in 1977. Broadcasting had been a strictly national service prior to that date. Initially offered in 'windows' in the P3 schedule, local services have successively moved to frequencies of their own, P4, over the past two years.

Regularly scheduled television service started in 1957; a second channel came on the air in 1969. Regional television transmissions (primarily news), first introduced in some districts in 1978, are now available throughout Sweden. Teletex services started on a permanent basis in 1980. Home video cassette recorders (VCRs) entered the Swedish market at the end of the 1970s; access to satellite TV via cable has grown during roughly the same period.

Radio and television services are regulated by a set of three documents: the Radio Act[10] and the Broadcasting Liability Act,[11] which apply to all public service broadcasting, and separate, albeit similar, contractual agreements between the State and each of the companies within Sveriges Radio. The acts set forth the general framework — granting sole rights, pledging sufficient funding and prohibiting prior censorship of programmes and specifying rights and obligations as generally pertain to freedom of the press — whereas the agreements specify criteria that programming must fulfil. Principal among these are the requirements of factuality and impartiality in all programming, a commitment to quality and generally accepted criteria of 'good taste', and an obligation to reflect a wide variety of views and cater for a broad range of interests.

The Broadcasting Commission,[12] a government-appointed board of review, independent of SR, is charged to examine radio and television programmes against which complaints have been filed to determine whether they fulfil the requirements of the acts and the contractual agreements. The Commission may also act on its own initiative. A dozen or so programmes are found in violation of the rules or are otherwise criticized each year.

Swedish laws regulating freedom of the press have a special, perhaps unique, provision. All legal liability for the content of print and broadcast media is borne by a designated physical person — the responsible publisher in the case of print media, and the programme supervisor in the case of broadcasting. This arrangement prevents legal prosecution of both media companies and journalists, thus protecting the anonymity of their sources.

Radio

Radio transmissions first came on the air in Sweden in 1925.

The present structure of services is as follows: three nationwide channels; P1, P2, and P3; and a set of 25 local stations, corresponding to Sweden's 25 counties: P4. In 1989 National Radio transmitted an average of 447 hours per week and Educational Broadcasting 23 hours per week.[13] With the move to P4, Local Radio services have expanded from 21 hours per station and week in 1986/87 to an average of 47 hours in 1989. Otherwise, the overall volume of radio service has remained largely unchanged since the early 1970s. With the exception of the move to P4, the distribution of programming between channels has also been fairly stable throughout the 1980s.

National Radio services have the following composition: nearly one-third light music and entertainment, a little over one-fourth non-fiction (including news and current events), and one-fourth fine arts (drama and serious music). Other main categories are programming intended for special audiences, e.g. children and youth (4 per cent of air time) and cultural minorities (8 per cent).[14] The 'mix' has remained largely unchanged throughout the 1980s, the only notable change being a decline in light music and entertainment from 35 to 30 per cent.[15]

Each channel has a distinct 'programme profile', as shown in Figure 3 below.

P2 and P3 transmit round the clock. Programmes produced by the Educational Broadcasting Company are transmitted on P2 and P4.[16]

The 25 Local Radio stations have nearly tripled their volume of production since the move to a channel of their own. Twenty-one stations broadcast up to 9 hours a day, three up to 15 hours a day, and one is still under development. Stations offer music (40–50 per cent), news and current events (33 per cent) and entertainment (12 per cent);

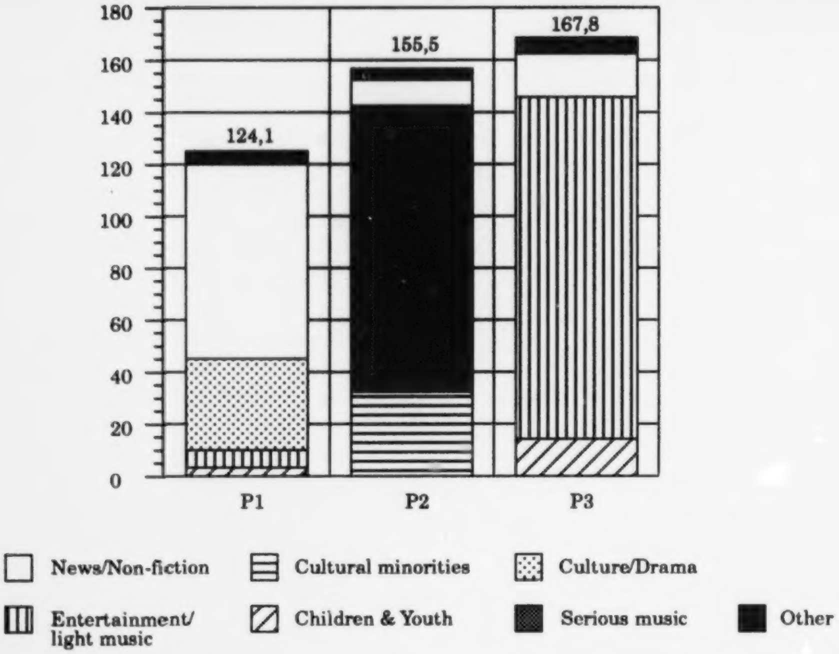


Fig. 3. Transmission time and channel content (h/w)

Source: Swedish National Radio. 1990. *Det här är Riksradion!* [This is Swedish National Radio].

other main categories are culture (8.5 per cent), programmes for youth and children (5 per cent) and programmes for linguistic minorities (6 per cent). With the exception of recorded music, the focus is distinctly local. Programming guidelines specify that half the recorded music offered should be of Swedish origin. Special efforts are made to document the work of local artists, including live recordings.

Community access radio was introduced on a trial basis in sixteen communities in 1979; it was made permanent in 1985. Broadcasting on FM frequencies from low-power transmitters having radii of 5–10 km, the stations are reserved for use by local clubs and voluntary associations. Locally based legal persons engaged in non-profitmaking, charitable, political, union or confessional works are eligible to apply to the Community Radio Commission for permits to use the frequencies.

Community access radio is regulated by separate legislation and monitored by the Community Radio Commission. Participating organizations are not bound to observe standards of impartiality and factuality, but programming is subject to regulations pertaining to freedom of the press (libel, sedition, racialism, etc.). Most of the work is done on a voluntary basis. No advertising is permitted. At this writing, 140 Swedish communities have access stations which broadcast an average 33 hours per week, although air times vary widely between stations. More than 2,300 groups are active.

As indicated below (Tables 1 and 2), religious groups have played a dominant role in community access radio from the start. Their share of air time is declining, however. Groups with an interest in music have also become fewer, due to the cost of royalties for transmission of recorded music.

Exposure

In radio's heyday — in the 1940s and 1950s, when it was the only electronic medium in Swedish households — evening radio programmes attracted as much as 70–80 per cent of the population, and ratings of 60 per cent on Saturday evenings were commonplace. When TV came on the scene, many people predicted drastic drops in listening and that only a small minority would continue listening to radio. These predictions were proved wrong. Radio continues to attract the same share of the population today as at the start of the 1960s (77 per cent during the average day), and when we consider the amount of time listeners devote to radio, we find that radio is still the mass medium that Swedes use most.

The pattern of radio listening — when people actually listen and under what circumstances — has changed radically, however. In the days before television, people planned their evenings around the radio, and they were prepared to listen carefully to radio drama, discussions and music. Today, television occupies Swedes' evenings and has replaced radio as their prime source of information and entertainment. Meanwhile, their favourite music is also available to them now on records and tapes. Radio listening today takes place primarily in daytime on weekdays. It is also increasingly a 'secondary' activity, that is, people listen while they are engaged in some other, 'primary' activity. Although secondary listening need not be totally absentminded listening, we find that a growing number of listeners seek out non-demanding programming — light music, short news bulletins and items that can be enjoyed intermittently.[17] This shift is reflected in a steady gradual decline in listening to P1, the 'channel of the spoken word', throughout the three-channel era and, simultaneously, a steady growth in P3's audience

TABLE 1

TRANSMITTERS AND LICENCES TO TRANSMIT COMMUNITY RADIO SERVICE, 1980–1990

Year	*Transmitters*	*Licences issued**
1980	16	no data
1981	16	299
1982	24	298
1983	40	308
1984	52	531
1985	79	816
1986	98	1542
1987	113	2095
1988	133	2344
1989	144	2381
1990	154	2400

*All data refer to 1 January, except for 1988 (1 August) and 1990 (1 April).

Source: Närradionämnden, data supplied to NORDICOM-Sweden (University of Göteborg).

TABLE 2

COMMUNITY RADIO: TOTAL TRANSMISSION TIME BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION (PERCENTUAL SHARES), SELECTED YEARS 1982–1989

Type of organization	*1983*	*1985*	*1987*	*1989*
Evangelical/Devotional	54	46	37	30
Political	7	20	19	19
Immigrant clubs	3	3	3	3
Music clubs	4	4	1	2
Sports clubs	2	2	2	2
Adult education organizations	2	5	9	10
University student clubs	9	7	7	7
Handicap organizations	1	0	0	0
Temperance societies	1	1	1	1
Trade unions	-	1	3	6
Community radio associations	-	1	2	3
Other	17	10	15	16

Source: Hedman, L. 1990. Närradio för föreningar – en sammanfattning av några undersökningar om närradion [Community radio for clubs and associations]. Uppsala: Department of Sociology, University of Uppsala, Närradioprojektet; 5.

(up to the start of local broadcasting on P4).

Radio listening on the whole remained highly stable throughout the 1980s, the most marked change being a decline in listening among children (9–14), whose prime interest is music. Listening is also evenly spread among demographic groups.

Listening to the respective channels shows more variation, however. The most marked trend over time is the above-mentioned decline in listening to P1 (from over 35 per cent of the population on an average day in 1970, to 25 per cent in 1980 and 17 per cent in 1989). The trend was accentuated when P3 started carrying programmes of news and news commentary (parallel with P1) in 1976, which meant that news-hungry listeners could now get everything they wanted on one and the same channel (prior to that time, P3 carried news bulletins only).

Tables 3 and 4 above show distinct audience profiles for each of the channels. With the exception of the impact of P4, there has been little change in the composition of the audiences the channels attract. When local radio services were carried on P3, they attracted 50 to 60 per cent of the population; in 1989, after local services moved to P4, audience shares of 32 per cent were noted (figures for 1990, however, suggest that the decline was only temporary). The main competition is between P3 and P4. The addition of a fourth channel has not led to an increase in daily listening time.

The audience sizes attracted by the respective channels are a fairly good indication of the kinds of content listeners seek out. Table 5 below shows the time devoted to various categories of content, irrespective of channel, in the 1980s.

Only one major study of a community access station's audience has been done to date (Weibull, 1985). The data are for Stockholm in 1984. Nine per cent of the respondents to the survey said they had listened to the station 'yesterday', and slightly less than 20 per cent said they generally listened sometime during the week. Most programmes reached listeners with some affiliation to the broadcasting organization; only programmes of recorded music — which have become fewer over time — reach more general audiences.[18]

Surveys have found that somewhat more than 10 per cent of the population listen to more than one radio channel any given day. One-channel listening — mainly to P3 — has increased over the past decade, but there are signs that the commencement of full services on P4 may break this trend.

As indicated earlier, the prime feature of developments in sound radio in Sweden is a marked trend towards decentralization. If television is being 'internationalized', radio has in recent years tended increasingly towards the local. This is reflected both in the establishment of Local Radio stations nationwide in the late 1970s and in a growing volume of productions from district offices in National Radio programming, i.e. nearly 40 per cent in 1989. Not to mention the wide variety of views and tastes represented in small, local community-access transmissions, the content of which is exempt from the demands of impartiality and factuality.

Although practically all radio services in Sweden emanate from the same institutional source, viz. the programme companies within Sveriges Radio, it would be wrong to consider Swedish radio monolithic. National programming offers the contributions of thirteen specialized departments in Stockholm, ten district offices throughout the country and thirteen correspondents stationed abroad. Local Radio is produced by 25 highly autonomous stations. No one outside the respective departments and stations has any say over what is to be aired, i.e. can exert prior censorship. All in all, the physical decentralization of services, coupled with a decentralization of liability and authority to the production units, makes for considerable diversity.

The two main concerns of this article, viz. the dichotomies between domestic and foreign fare and fact vs fiction, are not particularly relevant to radio in Sweden. With the

Table 3

Shares of the listening audience on an average day by sex, age and education (per cent), October/November 1989

	Total	*Sex*		*Age*					*Education*		
		M	*F*	*9-14*	*15-24*	*25-44*	*45-64*	*65-79*	*L*	*M*	*H*
Listened to radio (total)	76	77	74	53	75	79	82	73	76	79	80
Listened to P1	15	15	15	1	2	10	23	36	18	11	23
Listened to P2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	5
Listened to P3	55	59	52	45	63	66	52	37	52	62	58
Listened to P4	20	21	20	8	13	18	31	22	27	19	15
Other Local Radio (SR)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Community radio	2	3	2	4	6	2	1	1	1	3	2
Foreign radio station(s)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
P1, P2, P3, P4 (total)	74	76	73	52	71	78	81	73	75	77	79

Source: Falck, C. 1990. Radions publik okt/nov 1989 [The listening audience, Oct/Nov. 1989]. Stockholm: SR/PUB 3 - 1990.

Table 4

Listening time on average day among the total population, by sex, age and education, October/November 1989 (minutes)

	Total	*Sex*		*Age*					*Education*		
		M	*F*	*9-14*	*15-24*	*25-44*	*45-64*	*65-79*	*L*	*M*	H
Radio listening (total)	134	130	139	39	120	151	148	146	151	153	119
Listening to P1	14	12	17	0	1	7	18	44	19	11	18
Listening to P2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	3
Listening to P3	81	85	76	32	93	109	72	52	78	104	75
Listening to P4	35	28	41	4	18	30	55	45	52	32	18
Other Local Radio (SR)	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Community radio	3	3	2	2	8	2	0	1	1	4	4
Foreign radio station(s)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P1, P2, P3, P4 (total)	131	126	136	37	111	148	147	143	149	148	114

Note: Averages calculated on basis of entire population (listeners and non-listeners)

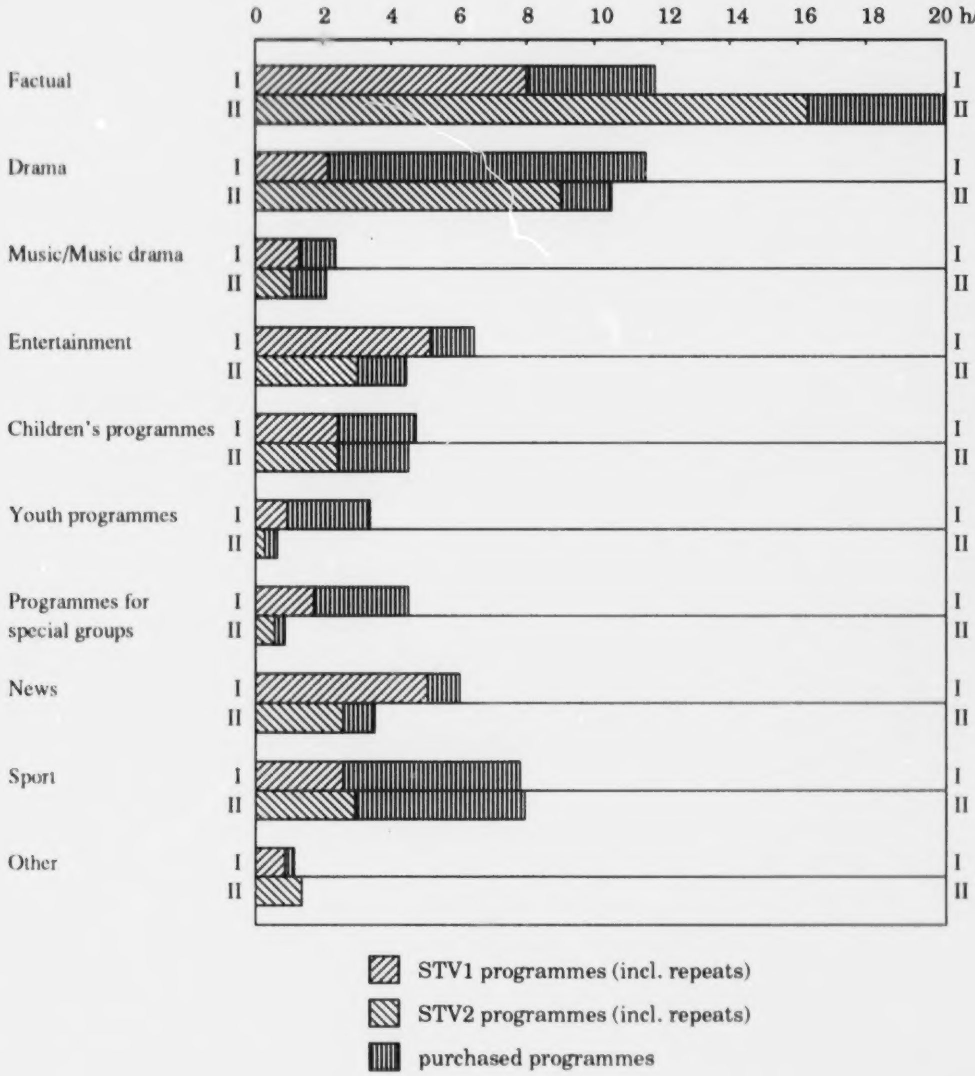
Source: Falck, C. 1990. Radions publik okt/nov 1989 [The listening audience, Oct/Nov. 1989]. Stockholm: SR/PUB 3 - 1990.

Table 5

Listening time on average day for different radio content, 1980/81, 1982/83 and 1987

Type of content	*1980/81*	*1982/83*	*1987*
News	10	11	13
Sport	4	8	6
Public affairs	4	2	3
Culture	1	2	1
Science	1	0	1
Religion	1	0	1
Drama	0	0	0
Serious music	2	1	1
Light music and entertainment*	45	49	52
Children's programmes	2	4	1
Youth programmes	5	11	6
Local radio	24	27	41
Other	3	2	3
Total	102	117	129

Source: Seasonal reports on radio listening, SR/PUB.



			SVT-share of air time(%) incl. repeats	SVT production (1st transmissions only), h/w
Factual	I	11.6	70	4.6
	II	20.0	83	11.6
Drama	I	11.3	23	1.3
	II	10.2	12	0.7
Music/Music drama	I	2.6	50	1.0
	II	2.0	60	0.8
Entertainment	I	6.3	87	3.1
	II	4.2	90	2.9
Children's programmes	I	4.7	67	1.5
	II	4.6	73	2.0
Youth programmes	I	3.2	43	0.6
	II	0.5	67	0.2
Programmes for special groups	I	5.5	38	1.5
	II	0.7	80	0.3
News	I	6.0	86	5.2
	II	3.5	89	3.2
Sport	I	7.8	42	3.3
	II	7.9	47	3.7
Other	I	1.2	83	0.8
	II	1.4	100	0.9

Fig. 4. Average weekly transmission time of SVT1 and SVT2 by type of content, July 1987–December 1989

Source: Swedish Television. 1990. *Facts about SVT 1990.*

exception of language courses and services to linguistic minorities, all programming is of Swedish origin and in Swedish. Services to linguistic minorities are, with the exception of special features and foreign news coverage, produced in Sweden. The balance between fact and 'fiction' (information vs music and entertainment here) has remained stable on the whole, although two changes have occurred within this overall stability: the addition of P4 gives listeners a choice of two channels of light music and entertainment and news briefs, and the extension of P2 to round-the-clock service has increased the overall output of classical music.

Two aspects of radio services that make use of 'new technology' should be mentioned here. 'Spoken newspapers', a service to the blind, are transmitted over the FM network at night. The coded transmissions of readings of the principal content can only be received by especially-equipped receivers in the homes of blind subscribers, where they are automatically taped. Secondly, in September 1987, Swedish National Radio commenced a trial period of programme exchanges via Eutelsat 1 (ECS1).[19]

With the exception of the impact of television noted earlier, SR/RUB's surveys have noted only one change in the use of radio as a result of new media technology. Young people's listening — to radio, gramophone records and cassettes — has declined somewhat in cabled areas. It seems as though music videos via satellite have displaced 'traditional' sources of music to some extent. Indeed, in a recent survey of viewing habits, three out of every four young people reported having listened to (not watched) television during the past week. The selection music videos offer is not essentially different from the recorded music available in other media — except for the fact that video clips are more explicitly instruments of recording companies' marketing campaigns.

Television

Domestic television services are, to an even greater degree than in the case of radio, concentrated within the Sveriges Radio group. Swedish Television (SVT) offers an average of 106 hours of programming each week over two channels that are equally accessible throughout the country. The channels were reorganized in 1987, so that SVT1 carries programmes produced mainly in Stockholm, and SVT2 programmes produced mainly in the company's ten districts, including regional newscasts on weekday evenings. Both channels carry purchased programmes, sports and educational programming.[20] Each has its own newsdesk.

Fig. 4 summarizes output in 1987/89 in respect of content and shares of in-house production.

SVT produces 58 per cent of the programming aired. As the figures above indicate, however, shares of in-house production vary widely between categories. Purchases from other Swedish producers are relatively few, averaging only 2.4 hours a week, or 5 per cent of first transmissions. Imports, from fifty different countries, comprised just over 40 per cent of total transmission time in 1987.[21]

'Programmes for Special Groups' refers to service for linguistic minorities and handicap groups. SVT offers regularly scheduled programmes in six languages, plus sign language, in addition to Swedish.

Repeat transmissions make up roughly one-quarter of the total. Children's programmes, half of which are produced by SVT, are repeated in particular.

With two exceptions, services from other sources than SVT are available via cable only. Cable in Sweden is almost exclusively a question of international satellite TV inasmuch as local channels have proven too expensive to produce without recourse to advertising revenues. The two exceptions are transborder ('spill-over') transmissions from Norway, Denmark and Finland and, since 1986, a specially-edited Finnish channel produced by Yleisradio that is broadcast locally over the Stockholm area to reach an estimated 100,000 Finnish-speaking residents.

Exposure

SR/PUB has monitored and analyzed television consumption patterns on a continual basis since 1969, when the second channel was introduced. Access to comparable data over two full decades has permitted thorough analysis of the impact of each new increment to Swedes' television menu.

Television history in Sweden may be summarized in terms of three main phases or eras (Fig. 5).

Between 1956 and 1969 only one channel was on the air. In late 1959 half the country was served, but a majority of Swedes did not yet have television in their homes. TV ownership increased rapidly in the interval 1958–62, rising from 15 to 74 per cent of the population. By the end of the 1960s, nine Swedes in ten had a TV set in their homes.

SVT2 came on the air in 1969, but on an ultra-high frequency (UHF) which meant that many households had to purchase new receiving equipment (TV set and/or antenna) in order to receive it. The second channel penetrated quickly, however, with access rising from 30 per cent at the outset to 90 per cent five years later.

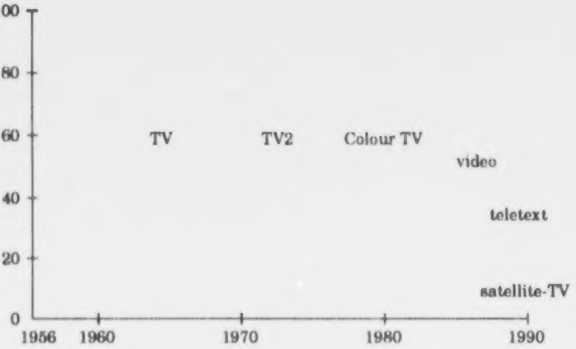


Fig. 5. Access to electronic visual media among the population (9–79 years), 1956–1990

Source: Gahlin, A. 1990. 'TV:s framväxt och tittarnas val' [The growth of television and viewers' choices]. Kap. 6 i Birgitta Höijer och Lilian Nowak (eds.), *I publikens intresse. Om radio och tv i människors liv.* Stockholm, Rabén & Sjögren.

The third era of Swedish television began in the early 1980s, with the establishment of cable networks bringing satellite channels into Swedish homes. Cable networks did not grow as fast as anticipated, however, and at the decade's end only about 20 per cent of the population had acquired access to satellite TV (roughly 1 per cent of Swedish households are equipped with individual parabolic antennas at this writing).

The first satellite programmes specifically targeting Scandinavian audiences came on the air in 1988. Principal among them is ScanSat/TV3, a commercially-financed channel beamed to Scandinavians exclusively. The channel reaches virtually all cabled households in Sweden. Others are an experiment with 'breakfast television' in Sky Channel and a block of Swedish programmes on Sundays in the French channel, TV5 — neither any longer on the air. Sky Channel's 'Good Morning, Scandinavia' lasted about a year. During that time a little less than one-fourth of cabled viewers in Sweden had seen at least one instalment. Weekly penetration was about 3 per cent of cabled viewers. The block of Swedish-produced programmes offered on Sundays on TV5 was aired for four months in late 1988. It included two programmes of news analysis and current events, one on Christian belief and lifestyles, and a cooking show.

Although neither of these two early ventures were commercial successes, the availability of programmes in Scandinavian language sparked greater interest in cable, and at the start of 1989 roughly 30,000 households were being connected to cable networks each month.

Fig. 6 illustrates the changes in output available to Swedish viewers in the three phases of television history.

The introduction of a second channel meant the doubling of air time (over the span of a couple of years) from 6 to 12 hours a day. Air time increased for all types of content, but the time allotted for news, feature films and fiction more than doubled. The most expansive programme category

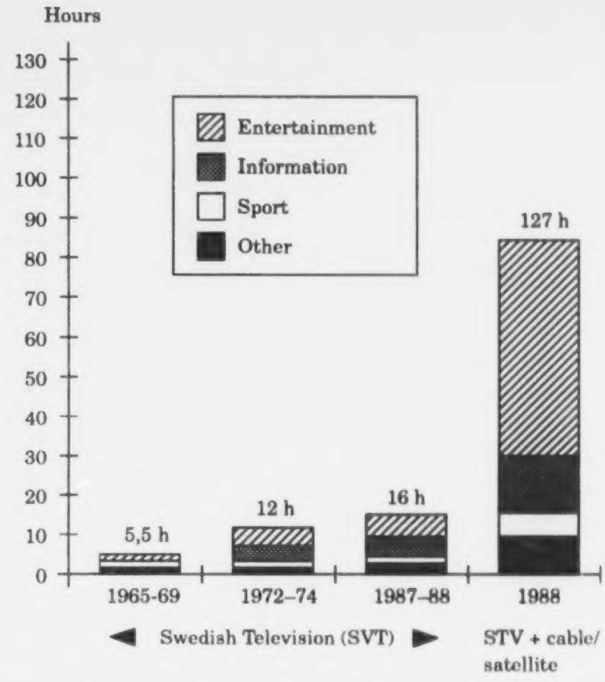


Fig. 6. Share of transmission time on average day for different kinds of content. Swedish Television (SVT) during three periods (1965–69, 1972–74 and 1987–88), and SVT + cable in Borås, 1988.

Source: Gahlin, A. 1990. 'TV:s framväxt och tittarnas val' [The growth of television and viewers' choices]. Kap. 6 i Birgitta Höijer och Lilian Nowak (eds.), *I publikens intresse. Om radio och tv i människors liv*. Stockholm, Rabén & Sjögren.

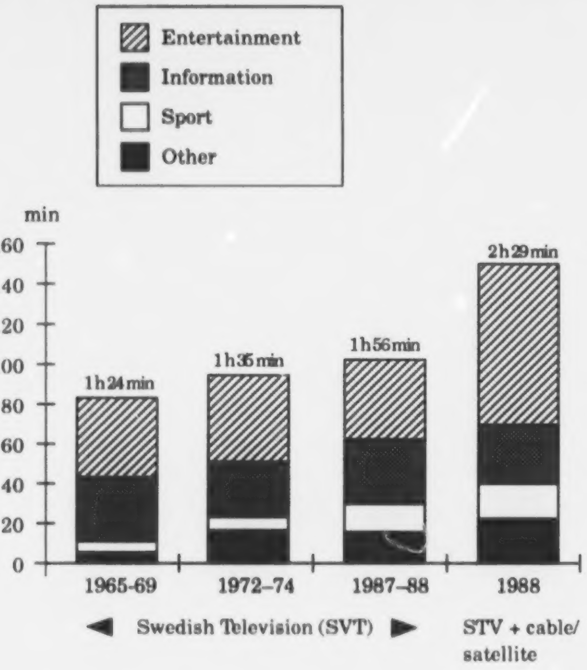


Fig. 7. Viewing of different types of content on average day (pop. 9–79 years) during three periods (1965–69, 1972–74 and 1987–88) and in a cabled area (Borås, 1988)

Source: Gahlin, A. 1990. 'TV:s framväxt och tittarnas val' [The growth of television and viewers' choices]. Kap. 6 i Birgitta Höijer och Lilian Nowak (eds.), *I publikens intresse. Om radio och tv i människors liv*. Stockholm, Rabén & Sjögren.

since the introduction of SVT2 is sport, which has more than doubled its air time.

In 1987/89 air time was extended to 16 hours a day, the most recent extensions being mainly the introduction of daytime programming (other than school-TV). And in all, the distribution between informative programmes (news and non-fiction) and entertainment (fiction, cabaret entertainment and music) in SVT's output has remained stable throughout all three phases.

In addition to bringing foreign rivals into Swedish sitting rooms, new technology has also enriched SVT output in several notable respects. Satellites have, for example, given television newsdesks access to news from a broad range of sources. In addition to Eurovision and Nordvision programme exchanges, exchanges with the Asian Broadcasting Union and newsroom access to CNN have amplified Swedish coverage.

A second change in output that took place in the 1970s was the growth of district production. An emphasis on district production was also a prime feature of the recent restructuring of channels mentioned above. But, aside from the production of regional news programmes and studio talk-shows, productions from district studios show rather little 'local colour'. This is because the respective production centres are specialized, not geographically, but according to subject matter and genre. Thus, decentralization within SVT has been of a different nature than that in Swedish radio services.

As Fig. 6 indicates, access to satellite channels has meant a massive increment of entertainment. Twice as much fiction and music/entertainment as information is now available to cabled households.

Obviously not all content attracts the same number of viewers: some programme types are more popular than others (Fig. 7). Differences in ratings between programme categories widened with the introduction of a second channel. Shortly after the second channel came on the air a distinct pattern of viewing preferences emerged. Although transmission time had doubled, average viewing time increased by only eleven minutes a day. Thus, on average, the audiences attending to individual programmes were cut by half. Some programme categories fared better than others; fiction, for example, retained most of its viewers, but whereas the output of informative programmes doubled, overall consumption of non-fiction declined. Given freedom of choice, viewers tended to choose entertainment at the expense of information, 'zig-zagging' between channels.

Today, preference patterns are basically as follows: roughly half the Swedish people watch at least one television newscast on an average day. Non-fiction — e.g.

documentaries, magazines and debates — attracts widely varying audiences, depending on genre and subject matter. On average, about 5 per cent of the population watch non-fiction *per se*. Subjects in the natural sciences are most popular: programmes about animals and their natural habitats, for example, consistently attract about 20 per cent of the population. Politics and current affairs generally attract fewer listeners than nature and science programmes, but when particularly salient or controversial issues are treated, viewers stream to their sets in great numbers. Some non-fiction programmes attract as much as 40 per cent of the population.

The numbers of viewers attending to fiction also vary widely — between 5 and 60 per cent. Average audience sizes, however, have remained stable for some years now at 15–20 per cent of the population. Whereas older viewers are over-represented in the audiences viewing informative programmes, young people dominate among consumers of fiction. Comedy and adventure are the most attractive genres, the largest audiences being noted when past Swedish box-office hits in these two genres are aired. Whereas interest in single dramatic productions has declined over the past decade, interest in Swedish serial fiction has, if anything, tended to increase. On the whole, Swedish fiction has been quite as popular as foreign fiction; on closer examination we find that elder viewers prefer Swedish, whereas younger viewers are equally receptive to foreign fiction.

Cable and satellite channels

Reception of broadcast signals has long been excellent throughout Sweden. Consequently, no areas were cabled until cable television was introduced on an experimental basis in Kiruna, a mining community in the far north, in 1974–75. Cable was envisioned as a medium for local services, and pilot projects in numerous other communities were undertaken in the ensuing decade. Legislation was drafted to regulate cable transmission and the first permanent stations were started up in 1986.

Cable broadcasting is regulated by the Cable Act. The controlling agency is the Cable Council (Kabelnämnden), which grants permits to programme companies (stations) transmitting on networks that connect more than 100 households. Swedish cable law defines two actors: the cable operator and the programme company. The former are entitled only to retransmit satellite channels; they are furthermore bound to carry Sveriges Radio's broadcast channels (the 'must-carry' principle) and to reserve one channel in their network for local service(s).

Programme companies must comprise a variety of local organizations having a base within the area to which the permit applies. Furthermore, the companies must be open to organizations wishing to join. Building societies/tenants' associations, devotional organizations and adult education associations are represented in three-quarters of the companies. Other major interests are newspapers and Swedish

TABLE 6

THE MOST WIDELY CARRIED SATELLITE CHANNELS IN SWEDISH CABLE NETWORKS, JULY 1990

Channel	*Nationality*	*Source of revenue*	*Number of networks*	*% of cabled households*
Superchannel	Ital./UK	advertising	311	83
TV3	Swedish	advertising	355	82
TV5	Francophone	government	293	82
MTV Europe	UK	advertising	314	82
Worldnet	USA	government	261	81
Eurosport	European (EBU)	advertising	226	73
Gorizont	USSR	licence/adv.	132	72
Nordic Channel	Swedish	advertising	129	61
Sky Europe	UK	advertising	32	7
One World Channel	UK	adv./sponsors	7	0.1
Filmnet	Swedish	subscription	183	76
Screensport	UK	subscr./adv.	154	68
CNN International	USA	subscr./adv.	159	65
Children's Channel	UK	subscr./adv.	170	65
Life Style	UK	subscr./adv.	169	61
SF Succé	Swedish	subscription	66	53
BBC Europe	UK	subscription	137	45
TV 1000	Swedish	subscription	68	45
Discovery Channel	USA	subscr./adv.	91	43

Italics indicate pay-TV channels

Sources: Kabelnämnden. 1990. Satellit-tv i Sverige, översikt 1990–01-01 ([Satellite-TV in Sweden, 1 January 1990].
Kabelnämnden, data suppled to NORDICOM-Sweden (University of Göteborg)
MedieNotiser. 1990. Satellit-och kabel-tv i Sverige. Göteborg: NORDICOM-Sverige, Göteborgs universitet; 3.

Telecom which participate in half of the companies. Local government participates in roughly three-quarters of their number. The Cable Council encourages the participation of local government, but this is not a requirement.

Programme companies may initiate programming, i.e. produce their own programmes and/or produce programmes for transmission. No advertising or sale of air time is permitted. Services have to be financed via subscribers' fees and subsidies from the participating organizations.

Analogous to the programme supervisor in the case of Sveriges Radio's programmes, a designated physical person bears legal liability for each cable station's output. (Where the programme company makes time available to other organizations, additional persons within the respective companies may be designated.)

The Cable Council is empowered to rescind permits when companies are found in violation of the ban on advertising. Court decisions are required in connection with violations of statutes concerning violence, pornography or racialism.

In addition to SVT's two channels, cable networks in Sweden carry three main types of programmes: locally-produced programmes, broadcast services from neighbouring countries and satellite channels. In Spring 1990 there were 443 cable networks in 205 of Sweden's municipalities. Just over one-third of these were owned by Swedish Telecom and about one-quarter belonged to building societies and tenants' associations. Roughly 40 per cent of the networks are owned and operated by cable television companies. Although Swedish Telecom is by far the largest operator, the company's overall share is declining.

Cable is a growing sector. In the interval between 1986 and 1988, the number of permits issued increased by 66 per cent, while the number of communities having networks increased by 27 per cent. Some 30 per cent of Swedish households are connected to cable at this writing. The current growth rate is an estimated 10 per cent per annum.

In February 1990, programme companies offered local TV services to about 493,000 households in nineteen communities. Local services are very limited, however, amounting in most cases to a couple of hours a week. The number of permits to transmit has increased, but the extent of services offered by most companies has not. Lack of revenues — no commercial advertising is permitted — has been the main inhibiting factor.

Altogether 26 foreign channels are available via satellite and cable in Sweden as a whole. TV3 is available to nearly every cabled household, as are Music Television (MTV), Super Channel, TV5 and Worldnet. Other widely available channels are Eurosport and Horizont.

Table 6 shows the extent of availability of various satellite channels in Sweden in July 1990.

Most cabled households are offered a 'menu' of channels (SVT1, SVT1, the local channel where such exists and a selection of satellite channels) for a basic monthly fee, plus a selection of optional pay-TV channels at additional cost. The composition of the 'menu' offered has fluctuated. For example, Sky Channel, Super Channel, TV5 (France), Horizont (Soviet Union) and WorldNet were generally included in Telecom's basic menu. CNN was also included in the basic menu for a while, but was 'displaced' by the entry of TV3 and MTV.

Access to the volume of programming available via cable — a tenfold increase in some areas — has meant greater viewing in cabled areas than in the nation as a whole — but *not* to the extent that might be expected. Over the past twenty years daily exposure has increased from an average 90 minutes to slightly more than two hours in cabled households. On average, cabled viewers spend about 20 minutes more watching television than the national average each day. (A certain 'novelty' effect is apparent: newly cabled viewers spend as much as 30 minutes more on TV, compared to only 10 minutes in areas that have had cable/satellite longest.)

It should be noted that even cabled viewers devote 65 per cent of their average daily viewing time (video exclusive) to SVT channels. No tendency for satellite channels to displace SVT channels is noted, except among children aged 9–14. (The pattern disappears again in the elder teen years.)

Until 1988, satellite channels carried —with the possible exception of an occasional Bergman film — foreign content exclusively. None of these programmes were subtitled or otherwise adapted for Swedish or Scandinavian audiences. Consequently, knowledge of a foreign language — in most cases English — was more or less a prerequisite to viewing enjoyment. (One can, of course, enjoy musical entertainment without necessarily understanding the words; the same goes for scenic documentaries. Moreover, a good share of Swedish preschoolers in cabled areas say they are accustomed to watching television without understanding what is said.)

The advent of a Scandinavian-language channel, TV3, via satellite from London in January of 1988 has had a major impact on cable-viewing patterns. At the time SR/PUB studied the cable audience (Autumn/Winter 1988/89), TV3 was on the air just over 40 hours a week. As in most commercially financed satellite channels, serial fiction, feature films and children's programming — primarily from the USA and Great Britain — dominate the TV3 menu. But TV3 also produces its own news, sports coverage and some entertainment. In contrast to other satellite channels, TV3 subtitles programmes imported from outside Scandinavia in Swedish or Norwegian.[22] Whereas other satellite channels available in Sweden appeal mainly to youth,[23] TV3 attracts viewers in all segments of the population and has become the main rival to SVT channels, attracting 25 per cent of the population in cabled areas on an average day.

All in all, SVT channels have been found to 'lose' 5 to 6 per cent of the audience and 16 minutes of viewing time to satellite channels — TV3 among them — on an average day. All categories of programming have felt the impact. Whereas earlier studies of viewing in cabled areas noted a palpable shift in viewing from information toward entertainment — a repeat, if you will, of the effect noted after TV2 came on the air — more recent research finds that domestic non-fiction has held its own. Fiction and entertainment on SVT channels suffered greater losses. In other words, whereas the addition of satellite channels to Swedish viewers' menu has meant an increase in the amount of entertainment in their TV diets, the increase has apparently not primarily occurred at the expense of the news and non-fiction offered on domestic channels. Metaphorically speaking, Swedish viewers have not abandoned their traditional rye-crisp for a steady diet of doughnuts, as some commentators had feared they would. Swedish programmes of news and non-fiction are apparently less 'interchangeable' than entertainment fare on SVT channels – much of which is imports, anyway.

A special study of the viewing habits of children and youth in cabled areas nationwide (March 1989) found that the time young people devote to satellite channels has remained more or less constant, despite increases in the number of channels available in cable networks. Scandinavian TV3 has not had any major impact on SVT's share of young people's attention, whereas it has to some extent 'displaced' other satellite channels in young people's TV diets.[24]

Schoolchildren (9–14) are more attuned to satellite programming than any other age group. Satellite viewing peaks in this bracket, with increases of as much as 30 minutes in total average daily viewing time. We also note a tendency for children in this age group to substitute fiction in satellite channels for factual and children's programmes in domestic channels. As noted above, this pattern disappears among elder teens, who turn to satellite mainly for feature films and music videos — a clearly complementary use.

The study also noted differences in cabled young people's use of video. They tend to use video somewhat less often than the national average, and recordings from satellite channels to some extent supplant rental films and off-air recordings from SVT.

Video

VCRs came onto the Swedish market in 1980 and, by the end of the decade, half of all Swedish households (50 per cent in January 1990) had a recorder. Families with young children were quick to acquire video, and they are still well-represented among video owners:[25] 70 per cent of Sweden's children and young teens have video in the home.

As Fig. 8 shows, daily use of video has not kept pace with the penetration of VCRs in Swedish homes. In addition, as more and more people acquire the hardware, the proportion using their videos on an average day has declined (from 31 per cent in 1985 to less than 20 per cent in 1988/89).

Pornography excluded, just over 2,000 titles circulated on the Swedish rental market in 1987, according to a government commission.[26] The same commission counted some fifty wholesalers dealing in entertainment films. One dominant wholesaler, Esselte Video, controlled about 500 titles; five additional dealers controlled 200 titles.

Wholesalers acquire rights to distribute titles in Sweden; in some cases this includes pay-TV and cinema screenings as well. Some wholesalers are affiliated to a film production company, serving as its exclusive agent in Sweden. Most sources of titles are foreign, as domestic production of films for video distribution is limited.

Eight hundred to 1,000 new titles of all categories are introduced each year. An estimated 1.2 million copies were in circulation in 1987/88. At the time of the commission's survey, roughly three-quarters of the titles circulated were in the action-adventure genre (including Westerns and science fiction). Newer, mass-appeal titles are distributed in as many as several thousand copies; more run-of-the-mill titles are distributed in about 400 copies.[27]

In 1988 there were just under 4,000 retail outlets throughout Sweden, over 400 new outlets having entered the market since 1987. Half of those belonging to the retailers' branch organization are specialty video shops; the remaining half are petrol stations, tobacconists, grocery shops, etc. Larger specialty shops offer as many as 1,000–2,000 titles.

Video does not appear to have encroached on television viewing; the same share of video owners who watch television on an average day is the same as among the population at large (Table 7). What is more, video is used primarily to 'time-shift'. Viewing of off-air recordings dominates weekdays, except among young people (15–24 years).

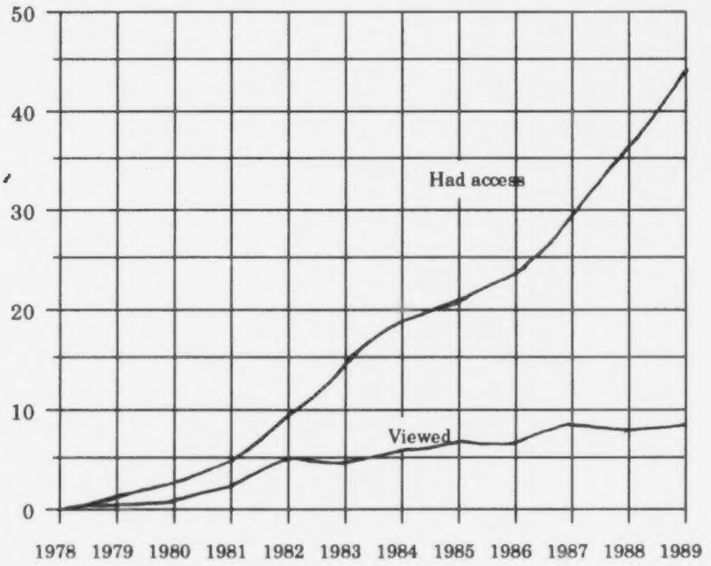


Fig. 8. Viewing of video on an average day (per cent of total population, 9–79 years)

Source: Gahlin, A.; Nordström, B. 1989. *Video: expansion och stagnation* [Video: expansion and stagnation]. Stockholm: SR/PUB 6 - 1989.

TABLE 7

VIEWING OF VIDEOGRAMS ON AN AVERAGE DAY IN AUTUMN/WINTER 1988/89 (PER CENT OF TOTAL POPULATION, 9–79 YEARS, BY SEX AND AGE)

	Total	*Sex*		*Age*				
	population	*M*	*F*	*9–14*	*15–24*	*25–44*	*45–64*	*65–79*
Off-air recording	5	6	4	12	7	5	3	1
Rental film	4	5	3	7	10	4	1	0
Purchased film	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other videogram	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Viewed video (all)	9	11	8	20	17	9	5	3

Source: Gahlin, A. Nordström, B. Video: expansion och stagnation [Video: expansion and stagnation]. Stockholm: SR/PUB 6–1989.

During the winter of 1988/89 Swedish households rented an average of 100,000 video films each day. A recent study found volume to have fallen off by nearly 20 per cent between October 1988 and October 1989. This happened in spite of an increase in the penetration of VCRs in Swedish homes. Access to satellite channels via cable would appear to be the main factor behind the decline.

Elder teens and young adults are the prime market for the film rental trade, and they account for more than half of all rental films. Ten per cent of this age group rented a video film on an average day in January 1989 — nearly three times the frequency among those aged 25–44.

We have seen how access to satellite channels tipped a previous balance between fact and fiction in SVT's public-service programming (Fig. 7). Total output of fiction more than doubled the volume. VCRs, giving access to the rental film market and permitting off-air recording of 'favourite' genres, have augmented the dominance of fiction on Swedes' visual-media menus.

Home recordings of television programmes are composed of a narrow slice of the genres available. Three in every four off-air recordings are serial fiction, feature films and entertainment, with serial fiction by far the most common. These genres represent only one-quarter of SVT output. Nearly all the rental films on the market are fiction.

Turning to the dichotomy Swedish vs foreign, we find a strong trend toward internationalization of electronic visual media (Table 8). Whereas early experimentation with cable television focused on local services, local television plays only a minor role today. Cable's main attraction lies in the access it provides to satellite channels, which may rightly be said to have razed Swedish frontiers.

TABLE 8

SHARES OF FOREIGN AND SWEDISH FARE IN TELEVISION AND VIDEO USAGE 1987/88

	Viewing of SVT	*Recording off-air*	*Viewing of off-air recordings*	*Rental videos*
Swedish	80	53	43	4
Foreign	20	47	57	96

Source: Gahlin, A. Nordström, B. Video: expansion och stagnation [Video: expansion and stagnation]. Stockholm: SR/PUB 6–1989.

Whereas imports have long comprised well over one-third of SVT's programming, the programmes are selected by Swedes with the Swedish public and Swedish values in mind. It is only natural that commercial channels, produced abroad for viewers in many countries, should have a different flavour.

Satellites transmitting stronger signals to individual parabolic antennae may be expected to increase the total number of channels received in Sweden. Such a development is still largely a thing of the future at this writing.

Again, video compounds the trend. Whereas 80 per cent of programmes in SVT channels are domestic productions (i.e. 60 per cent air time), nearly 60 per cent of the programmes recorded off the air are of foreign origin, with serial fiction and feature films being the prime genres. Foreign dominance is nearly total in the case of rental films: only 4 per cent of the titles rented are domestic productions.

One change of a more qualitative nature that may be attributed to the vast amount of content made available via video and satellite channels is a notable shift in the 'status' accorded viewing as a leisure activity. In the early days of television, families planned their evenings around programme schedules, they gathered around their set and visitors joined in. Viewing is much less central today. Recent surveys have found that many cabled viewers switch on their sets without checking in advance to find out what is on. Remote control devices make it easy to 'browse' among channels. Television no longer assembles the whole family, as viewing has become an increasingly individual activity. What is more, we find a growing tendency for some other activity to accompany 'viewing' (which, as noted above, is sometimes only 'TV-listening').

Thus, we note a trend in television today that parallels the one noted in radio listening in the 1970s. As in the case of radio, more casual viewing has influenced programme content. We find a trend toward serialized fiction — domestic and foreign alike — in which story lines permit viewers to come and go at will; meanwhile, single dramas attract smaller audiences as fewer and fewer viewers check newspaper schedules to 'see what's on'.

Teletext

Teletext services are provided nationwide by a department within Swedish Television. Broadcast signals require a special receiver, whereas cabled viewers can receive services with no additional equipment. Roughly half the population are able to receive teletext services today.

Introduced as an aid to the deaf and hearing-impaired in 1980, the technology was first used to furnish programmes with subtitles on an elective basis. Other services that have developed over the years include news, weather and sports bulletins and information about programmes.

Teletext services doubled in volume in the first half of the 1980s. In 1987/88 about eleven hours of programming were subtitled each week, about half of which was 'live' commentary and half traditional subtitles. Approximately 400 pages of information were distributed daily in 1989.[28]

Some cable television networks also offer teletext services, and more of such services were reportedly planned in 1987/88.

Cinema

The story of the film and cinema industry in Sweden during 'the age of television' is one of relentless decline until the latter half of the 1980s, when a certain stabilization became apparent.

The cinema in Sweden had its heyday in the 1940s and 1950s. A branch study from 1960 attributes the 'boom' of the 1950s to a rise in disposable income among young people. Statistics from the period show a median age of 24 years for those who went to the cinema at least once a week. Then as now, films had a special appeal for elder teens and young adults. The boom was to be short-lived, however, as the same purchasing power would make it possible for Swedes to buy television sets on a mass scale as service became available to them.

In the peak years of the mid-1950s there were some 2,500 cinemas throughout Sweden. Annual cinema attendance averaged around 80 million. Ten years later cinema-going had fallen off by 50 per cent. By the early 1980s, the number of cinemas had been halved and cinema attendance had fallen to roughly one-fifth of what it was in 1956, the year before television transmissions started.

The principal factor behind this decline is, of course, television — flanked more recently by home video and pay-TV. The drop in cinema attendance clearly parallels the advance of television and video in Sweden. Between 1956 and 1969/70 when SVT2 came on the air and nearly every household contained a television set, annual cinema attendance fell from 80 to 28 million. The market for home video opened in 1978, and VCR sales 'took off' in 1980. Between 1978/79 and 1982/83 annual cinema attendance plummeted still further from 25.5 to 18.8 million.

A special, albeit not unique, circumstance in Sweden is the unity of economic interests in film production and distribution: until the 1970s the major production companies were also the major distributors.[29] In terms of competition for viewers, cinema and the electronic audiovisual media are clearly directly antagonistic. Television made it possible for people to watch visual drama in the comfort of their sitting rooms; twenty years later video and pay-TV film channels represent alternative means of distributing more or less the same content as cinemas offer. Indeed from the outset feature film producers saw in video a means to 'win back' audiences from television; that this would occur at the expense of cinema houses was of lesser concern. In Sweden the film/cinema industry looks upon the respective forms of distribution as being complementary: video and pay-TV will fill the gap in communities where traditional cinemas are no longer viable. Distribution of 'film' in the form of videograms is less costly than cinema screenings. Productions distributed on cassettes need not 'sell' as much to cover their costs. Many popular titles are distributed first in cassettes and subsequently via television.

The forms are also complementary in fiscal terms inasmuch as film producers/distributors also have financial interests in video and pay-TV. (What is more, revenues from video are fed back into film production — see below.)

Another exceptional circumstance pertaining to the motion picture industry in Sweden is the institution of film censorship. Film is the sole mass medium to be subjected to pre-publication censorship. A National Board of Film Censorship is empowered to delete content or to ban films altogether. Censorship is chiefly exercised in the interest of young viewers and focuses on excessive brutality and/or pornography. The Board also determines age-limits — 'suitable for children' and 'from 15 years only' — which are upheld by box-office personnel. Since 1986, film censors also vet video films intended for public screening.[30]

The traditional cinema's 'retreat from the field' is apparent in two out of three statistics: the number of cinemas, cinema attendance, and the number of Swedish films produced each year. Table 9 below summarizes the trend since 1965.

Film production in Sweden is as sensitive to cost trends on the labour market at large as to competition from electronic media. Personnel-intensive industries and services of all kinds face difficulties in Sweden, and investment in Swedish film production was a risky business long before television came on the scene. The fact that Swedish films appeal to a market of only 8–9 million speakers of Swedish makes it particularly difficult for productions to return investments, let alone show a profit. Private funding for Swedish film production had fallen off as early as the 1950s. Obviously, willingness to invest in film production hardly increased as Swedes began staying home to watch television.

Even in the heyday of the cinema, Swedish films made up only about 10 per cent of the titles released on the Swedish market each year. They accounted for well over 20 per cent of box-office revenues, however, and Swedish production companies used these to subsidize their activities. Thus, television's impact on cinema attendance cut with a double edge.

In 1963 the slump in Swedish films had reached the point where both Parliament and the film industry found it necessary to seek ways to stimulate domestic production and distribution. The Swedish film industry was (and continues to be) chary of financing directly from the Treasury and sought to retain some control over funding. Consequently, the industry rejected the idea of state subsidies, but rather

TABLE 9

CINEMAS, TICKET SALES, FILMS IN DISTRIBUTION AND AUDIENCE SHARES OF SWEDISH PRODUCTIONS, SELECTED YEARS 1964/65–1989/90

	1964/65	*1968/69*	*1974/75*	*1980/81*	*1982/83*	*1984/85*	*1986/87*	*1988/89*	*1989/90*
Cinemas (total)[1]	1,814	1,513	1,199	1,249	1,253	1,139	1,114	1,122	1,131
of which having more than 6 screenings/week[2]	486	449	340	424	431	389	380	413	414
Tickets sold (millions)	38.2	30.4	25.4	23.1	18.8	18.0	17.0	18.4	17.0
First-run films									
Foreign	257	303	214	309	194	255	212	209	162
Swedish	24 (9%)	33 (10%)	23 (10%)	17 (5%)	20 (9%)	14 (5%)	26 (11%)	32 (13%)	28 (14%)
Swedish/foreign	-	-	1	3	6	9	1	7	5
Swedish first-run films' share of ticket sales	19%	10%	10%	19%	18%	20%	15%	13%	15%
All films in distribution									
Foreign	2,193	984	1,402	1,326	1,404	1,063	878	779	794
Swedish	266 (11%)	259 (12%)	173 (11%)	146 (10%)	162 (10%)	131 (11%)	204 (19%)	218 (22%)	289 (27%)
Swedish films' share of ticket sales	23%	14%[4]	14%	31%	30%	2%	21%	17%	26%

Notes:

1. 'Multi-mini' cinemas (cine-city houses) count as one unit.
2. Cinemas offering six or more screenings per week account for over 80 per cent of all cinema attendance throughout.
3. Screenings in cinemas offering fewer than six screenings per week included.
4. Share of box office receipts (rather than tickets sold).

Sources: Statistisk Årsbok 1964–1988; SFI annual reports, 1963/64 ... 1989/90; unpublished data for 1973/74–1988/89 supplied by SFI to Nordicom (University of Gothenburg).

aimed at persuading the State to place an excise tax (25 per cent) on cinema tickets. In return the industry was prepared to contribute a fee of 10 per cent of gross box-office revenues to a publicly-administered Film Fund.

Parliament agreed to this model and created the Swedish Film Institute (SFI) to administer the Fund, made up of fees from cinemas with six or more screenings per week. In 1982 flat-rate surcharges per copy were imposed on videograms (SEK 40) and blank cassettes (SEK 15). (The surcharge on video-films was raised to SEK 60 in 1988.) Revenues from these two sources represent about two-thirds of publicly administered support to the domestic film industry. About 60 per cent of the support goes to film production, and the rest to auxiliary activities including the importation and distribution of quality films and the maintenance of a national audio-visual archive.

The programme succeeded in bolstering domestic production which immediately doubled in volume. As Table 9 indicates, Swedish film production has maintained its share of new releases.

Between 1955 and 1975 the number of communities having at least one cinema fell by half. The great decline in the number of cinemas has occurred in the countryside in particular. Cinemas in larger Swedish towns and cities have fared better than those in rural areas, declining in number by only 20 per cent.

Just over 200 Swedish communities were served by one or more cinemas in 1986. Two chains own most of the cinemas[31] and thus dominate film distribution in Sweden. Concentration has not appreciably affected the variety of imports available to most communities with cinemas. Only the most popular titles shown in première (first-run) cinemas in larger towns and cities ever reach communities in the hinterland. Smaller towns have never had access to 'art films' other than through the auspices of film studio clubs.[32] But concentration has obviously affected the volume of imported films as a whole in recent years (cf. Tables 10 and 11), which reasonably implies some constriction of variety as well. Whether this change reflects deliberate favouring of Swedish productions on the part of SFI or merely fiscal conservatism on the part of distributors is a question for future research. Distributors did cut costs in other aspects (e.g. closures of less profitable cinemas) in the early 1970s. Perhaps it is now the turn of imports. Cinema, a relatively costly form of distribution is increasingly reserved for 'sure sellers'. (We shall return to this point when considering audience behaviour).

Swedish subsidiaries of American distributors dominate the import of foreign films. This is also reflected in the distribution of première or first-run films by country of origin (Table 10). The United States has consistently supplied about half the total volume of imports. Systematic statistics concerning the origin of imported films prior to 1980 are lacking. Reinholds (1987*a,b*) notes, however, that cinema repertoires remained largely unchanged between 1920 and 1970. Data from UNESCO (1975) indicate that the United States supplied 41 per cent of foreign titles to Sweden in 1971. Serial data covering the 1980s suggest a trend

Table 10

First-run films by country or region of origin (per cent), 1971 and selected years 1980–1989

Country/region	*1971*	*1980*	*1982*	*1984*	*1986*	*1988*	*1989*
Sweden	-	8	6	5	9	12	12
Other Nordic*	-	6	5	4	4	3	4
USSR, Eastern Europe	-	1	3	3	4	1	9
Other European**	-	32	28	25	20	19	20
USA	41	48	50	57	60	58	50
Total	-	100	100	100	100	99	101
N Films	290	302	259	260	231	236	220

* The Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

** The United Kingdom, West Germany and France predominate.

Sources: Sveska Filminstitutet (SFI): Verksamhetsberättelser [Annual reports] 1963/64 ... 1989/90. Statistiska centralbyrån. 1989. Statistisk årsbok 1989 [Statistical yearbook 1989]. Stockholm: SCB. Unpublished SFI data reported to NORDICOM (University of Göteborg), 1990.

towards increasing dominance of American films in the Swedish repertoire over the past decade, as the volume of imports has shrunk. (This trend would probably be even more pronounced were it not for SFI's programme to support quality imports from sources outside the mainstream of international cultural commerce.)

Première films are not the only films in circulation in Swedish cinemas. When we include second-run and repertory titles, the variety of titles increases substantially, as does the share of Swedish titles.

A modern phenomenon in Swedish cinema is the 'cinecity' or 'multi-mini cinema', consisting of several (usually three) screens in smaller halls. Automatization in the projection room, staggered screening and a swelling stream of visitors to the cinema building have made it possible to invest in comfort, service and nostalgic 'glamour'. First introduced in the 1970s, these cinemas have proved to be commercial successes, and several new establishments are currently under construction in Swedish towns. They have broadened the repertoire outside Sweden's principal cities.

In addition to box-office statistics recorded by SFI, two sets of data cast light on changes in Swedish audiences and their cinema-going behaviour in the 'age of television'. The first is a survey of the Swedish film industry between 1900 and 1975 carried out by Jan Reinholds of the Department of Economic History at the University of Gothenburg. Secondly, we have serial data and special studies of leisure and cultural activities from SR/PUB.

Inasmuch as the film/cinema industry is highly market-oriented, it is difficult, and perhaps not particularly fruitful, to try to treat supply and demand separately, let alone determine cause and effect. Reinhold's history (1987) focuses on the interaction between the two. He notes two overall changes in the period his study encompasses: firstly, rises in ticket prices in the 1960s transformed cinema-going from a poor man's pleasure to a pastime for the more well-heeled, and, secondly, before television, people went to the cinema as such and were not particularly selective in their choice of films. Between 1920 and 1970 the repertoire was more or less standard, and 'stars' and directors were fairly well-known. Television— and rising ticket prices — changed this. Cinema-goers became more selective; after all, 'random entertainment' could be had in the comfort of their homes free of charge. Meanwhile,the film/cinema industry, too, sought strategies to meet the challenge of television. The repertoire changed, as production companies focused more and more on differentiated 'target audiences'. Marketing and publicity came to play an increasingly important role.

Increased selectivity and audience differentiation are reflected in statistics for the period. Before 1950 films normally sold about 200,000 tickets, and Swedish films about 600,000. In the interval 1965–75, despite steady drops in attendance overall, at least one film each year sold more than a million tickets, and an additional 6–7 films more than 700,000 tickets. In the early 1970s, the ten most popular releases (4 per cent of the films in circulation) attracted over 25 per cent of the total cinema audience. The most popular première films began to be given several 'runs' during the same season inasmuch as film distributors found a proven success to be less of a risk than an unknown film. In 1989/90 the 'top ten' film share had grown to 40 per cent of all visits to the cinema. In sum, therefore, there has been a notable concentration of cinema-going on ever fewer titles.

The overall decline in box-office is due mainly to a decline in the frequency of visits to the cinema. That is to say, cinema continued to attract essentially the same sectors of the public — although the dominance of young people was enhanced after television entered Swedish households.

A special study of cinema habits done by SR/PUB covers the 1980s, by which time video, too, had entered Swedish households. Cinema-going for an 'average day' was found to have declined by 26 per cent in the interval 1980/81 to 1985/86. The decline was particularly marked among young people aged 15–24 (52 per cent) and men (33 per cent), groups known to be 'heavy' consumers of videograms.[33] The findings of this survey indicate that younger middle-aged persons, men and women in equal measure, are now Sweden's prime cinema-goers.

That the decline is due to less frequent attendance rather than the loss of a sector of the audience is confirmed in SR/

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY OF CINEMA-GOING BY SEX, AGE, EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS, 1983–85, 1985–87 AND 1987–89

Have visited cinema at least once during ...	*past 4 weeks*			*past 12 months*		
	1983–85	*1985–87*	*1987–89*	*1983–85*	*1985–87*	*1987–89*
Total population	22	25	24	52	54	50
Men	24	26	24	54	54	50
Women	20	24	24	51	54	51
9–14 years	29	42	42	83	89	82
15–24 years	58	64	63	92	93	90
25–44 years	21	24	22	60	62	59
45–64 years	6	6	8	27	30	29
65–79 years	2	2	2	7	10	7
Education						
Low	11	11	9	31	30	25
Medium	31	33	32	64	66	62
High	31	33	33	69	69	69
Occupational status						
Full-time	23	26	23	57	59	54
Part-time	17	18	16	48	53	49
Student	58	65	70	91	94	95
'Idle'*	7	5	8	30	34	34
Pensioner	2	2	2	8	11	8

* 'Idle' in the sense of not employed, not part of the labour fource: unemployed by either choice or circumstance.

Source: Nordberg, Jan; Nylöf, Göran. 1989. Kulturbarometern, perioden juli 1987–juni 1989 [Barometer of cultural activities, July 1987–June 1989]. Stockholm: SR/PUB and Statens Kulturråd, PUB informerar; 1989:V.

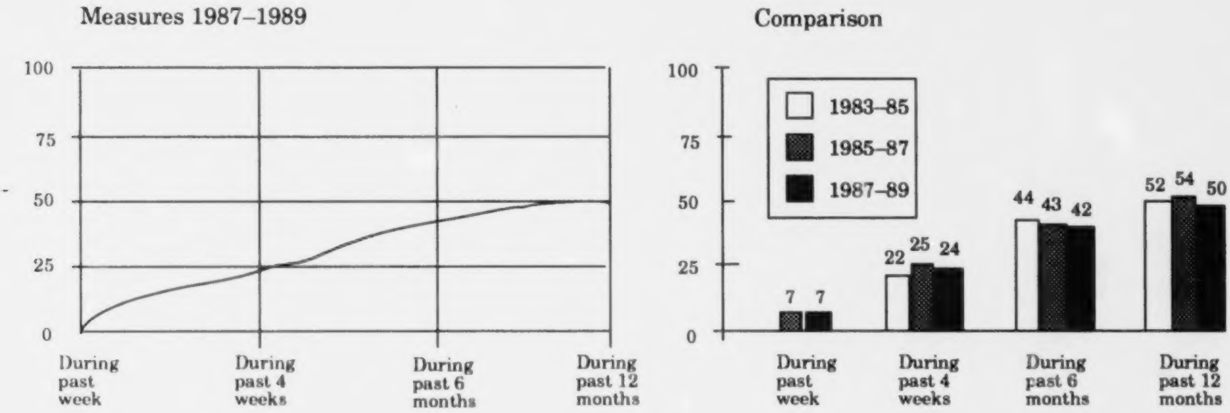


Fig. 9. Share of population who have visited the cinema

Source: Nordberg, J.; Nylöf, G. 1989. *Kulturbarometern, perioden juli 1987–juni 1989* [Barometer of cultural activities, July 1987–June 1989]. Stockholm: SR/PUB and Statens Kulturråd, PUB informerar; 1989: V.

PUB's serial data on cultural activities covering the period 1983–89. The 'barometer of cultural activity' measures activity in four intervals: (during) the past week, the past four weeks, the past six months and the past twelve months (Fig. 9). When we consider cinema-going in these extended time frames, we find no difference in attendance among the population as a whole since 1983 (cf. the 26 per cent decline in daily cinema-going noted above).

Looking at subgroups we find a marked increase in cinema attendance over 'the past four weeks' among Swedish teens and young adults (and among the occupational category 'students'). We also find that the gap between persons with little formal education and other educational groups has widened. This may be due to rises in ticket prices, which averaged 9 per cent per annum during the period in question. Ticket price levels may also explain the difference between PUB's findings regarding 'daily' and 'monthly' attendance respectively: the cinema continues to attract young people, but their consumption is now divided between the cinema and (much less costly) video (Table 11).

TABLE 12

THE TEN MOST POPULAR CINEMA FILMS DURING THE 1980s

Title	*Origin*	*Swedish première*	*Tickets sold*
Raiders of the Lost Ark	USA	1981	2,010,065
Sällskapsresan (comedy)	Sweden	1980	2,001,181
Ronja Rövardotter (juvenile adventure)	Sweden	1984	1,599,298
Sällskapsresan II (comedy)	Sweden	1985	1,518,783
SOS – en segeelsällskapsresa (comedy)	Sweden	1988	1,494,159
Göta Kanal (comedy)	Sweden	1981	1,157,846
Crocodile Dundee	Australia	1987	1,153,882
Octopussy	USA	1983	1,123,002
E.T.	USA	1982	1,099,239
Amadeus	USA	1984	1,061,779

Sources: Wredlund, B. 1980–1989. Filmårsboken 1988 [Film yearbook 1988]. Proprius/Filminstitutet. Data compiled by NORDICOM-Sweden (University of Göteborg).

A change noted in the special survey from 1985/86 is a decline in 'larger towns' (metropolitan areas exclusive). Daily cinema attendance in these communities fell by more than half since the start of the decade. What this reflects — closures of cinemas, a shift to video rentals, extension of cable television networks, all three or some other factor altogether — is a question for future research.

Going to the cinema is still most popular in metropolitan areas, as has been the case ever since the medium was invented. SFI statistics show that 43 per cent of all visits to the cinema in 1989/90 took place in Sweden's three major cities.

As noted earlier, Swedish productions have made up 5–10 per cent of the titles released each year. Equally consistently, Swedish films have attracted a considerable share of the cinema audience — an average of 14 per cent for première films, but 18 per cent of total annual tickets sold between 1963 and 1989.[34]

An alternative approach to popularity is to consider the most popular titles in a given period of time. Sweden's 'top-ten' list, in terms of box-office for the period 1980–89, is given in Table 12.

This reflects both the dominance of American film culture and the popularity of Swedish films noted above.

Swedes like Swedish films — particularly comedies. Statistics for 1989/90 show that four Swedish releases attracted 14 per cent of all visits to the cinema that year. Still, the predominance of American films in Sweden is striking. Typically, they account for 70 per cent or more of cinema tickets sold. Whereas they made up 36 per cent of all films screened in 1989/90, they account for no less than 69 per cent of cinema visits. Films from other anglophone countries are also relatively popular, but hardly to the same extent.The United Kingdom and Australia together contributed just under 8 per cent of the films screened in Sweden in 1989/90, but they account for only 5.5 per cent of tickets sold. Imports from non-anglophone countries represented about 37 per cent of the films screened; together they account for 6 per cent of cinema attendance.

Preferences as to genre have been little analyzed. SR/PUB's study in 1985/86 found that 45 per cent of cinema-goers interviewed had most recently seen a film that could be categorized as 'adventure'. Forty per cent had seen a 'comedy'. One in ten had seen what PUB researchers classified as 'realism'. These figures more or less parallel content preferences noted for television, and they are clearly confirmed in the 'top-ten' list above. Data (other than top-ten lists) that would permit comparison in genre preferences over time are lacking.

All in all, although films and the cinema industry have lost their dominance among media in Sweden, they are far from being extinct. That cinema-going still has a future in Sweden may be surmised from the slight upturn in cinema attendance in the latter half of the 1980s and innovations such as the 'cine-city' or 'multi-mini cinema' and (still future) high definition video technology that will permit electronic distribution of 'films' to cinemas nationwide.

Non-impact of electronic media on cultural activities

When radio, and then television, first came on the scene, many words of warning about their impact on 'cultural life' were heard. No one would read books any longer, go to concerts or take part in club activities, and so forth. Fortunately, these dire predictions proved wrong. The myth, however, lives on inasmuch as a good deal of our quantitative research is reported in terms of behaviour on an 'average day'.

As noted earlier, SR/PUB's barometer of cultural activities monitors the frequency of 19 such activities in four extended time frames: the past week, the past four weeks, the past six months and the past 12 months. Since 1979, when PUB started taking such barometer readings, an actual increase in daily reading has been noted.

Other cultural activities, however, are best measured in the extended frames. When we consider activities in longer time spans, we find that low-frequency non-medial activities and high-frequency media consumption do not even compete with one another. That is, no correlations — positive or negative — exist between consumption of the electronic media and degree of participation in activities such as singing, playing a musical instrument, visiting exhibitions and theatre, writing poetry, and so on.

Here ends our review of the 'impact of electronic media' in Sweden today (January 1990). The Swedish media, particularly audiovisual ones, are undergoing rapid change, however, and adjustments in the markets for videograms (rentals and sales) and cinema films may be expected as an increasing number of television channels (including pay-TV) become available to ever greater shares of the population. On the whole, however, the trends to date reveal a striking degree of stability in Swedes' leisure habits, nor are the 'adjustments' we can anticipate likely to imply any radical transformation of life as it is lived in Sweden.

Notes

1. The *Media Barometer* is a collaborative project undertaken jointly by SR/PUB and Dagspresskollegiet, the marketing research organ of the Swedish newspaper industry, based in Gothenburg.
2. In 1984/85 the project became a joint venture run by SR/PUB and the Swedish Cultural Council.
3. Inasmuch as these activities are less frequent than media use, the series required different units of measurement: whereas media use is measured in terms of the average day, we measure cultural activities in terms of the past week, the past four weeks, the past six months, and the past year.
4. Sweden's smallest units of local government; some municipalities (***kommuner***) have only two or three towns or major villages (Statistika centralbyrån 1989).
5. Community radio (Närradio) services, independent of Sveriges Radio, are not subject to the requirements of impartiality and factuality, but neither are they allowed to carry advertising or to accept commercial sponsorship.
6. Unless otherwise specified, statistical data and descriptions of trends in media consumption originate with the Audience and Programme Research Department of Sveriges Radio.
7. The Swedish Institute (1988).
8. Ibid.
9. The fourteen 'popular movements' are democratic, voluntary organizations with nationwide membership. They include labour unions, adult education associations, consumer cooperation groups, temperance unions, the Church of Sweden and evangelical churches and the national sport federation.
10. Radiolag (FS 1966:755 as last amended 1986 (SFS 1986:1209)).
11. Radioansvarighetslag (SFS 1960:756 as last amended 1986 (SFS 1986:1211)).
12. The Commission, Radionämnden, formerly known as the Broadcasting Council, recently changed its name in English. A caveat: this is also the generally accepted term of reference for *ad hoc* Parliamentary commissions on broadcasting policy.
13. Weekly transmission figure, based on prognoses published by the respective companies in the last quarter of 1989.
14. Swedish National Radio (1988).
15. Nordström (1987); Swedish National Radio (1990).
16. Parliament voted in 1976 to form the Educational Broadcasting Company (UR), a subsidiary of Sveriges Radio. Between 1977 and 1985, UR's budget was covered out of the Treasury (and since then out of licence fee revenues). UR produces radio and television programmes for all levels of education, both intra- and extramural. Production takes place in Stockholm and out of 23 district offices. Programmes are transmitted over SR channels, but they are also generally available on tape from public libraries and a network of AV-centres. Altogether 1,436 hours of educational programming were transmitted in 1986/87, roughly two-thirds of them via radio. One-third of UR's radio programmes are produced and distributed on a regional basis (P4).
17. Television's 'displacement' of radio as an entertainment medium has clearly affected programme policy. Full-length radio plays with 'all-star' casts, for example, are more or less a thing of the past. The dominant form of radio drama today is feuilletons of 10–15 minutes. Aside from their brevity, the productions are also less elaborate, consisting primarily of voices (text). 'Incidentals' such as sound effects to establish milieu and spatial relationships are relatively few. Thus, 'visualization' is now left to a visual medium, television. This, in turn, affects listeners' expectations and use of the respective media.
18. Weibull, L. 1985. *Närradiolyssnandet i Stockholm,* Dept. of Mass Communication, University of Gothenburg.
19. Three international radio channels — SkyRadio, BBC and RTL — are available to most Swedish cable networks, but at this writing they are not distributed other than on a trial basis in Malmö and Stockholm.
20. Cf. note 9.
21. Swedish Television (1990b).
22. Norwegian and Swedish — particularly in their written forms — are comprehensible to most people in the two nations, as well as to Danes and Swedish-speaking Finns.
23. After many years of instruction on an experimental basis, English was introduced into the standard curriculum from the fourth to the seventh year in 1962. Since 1969, all Swedish youngsters are taught English from their third year of elementary school (age 9–10) through their ninth year. A third language is selected in the seventh year.
24. MTV is a strong rival among teenagers, however. Among young people whose families subscribe to FilmNet (pay-TV), the latter bested both TV3 and MTV.
25. 'Owners' here includes those who rent or lease hardware.
26. *Videovåld* [Video violence]. Report of the Commission on Portrayals of Violence, DsU 1987:8. Stockholm, Utbildningsdepartementet, 1987.
27. Sales of video cassettes are a relatively new phenomenon in Sweden. The market opened in 1988 with the release of action-adventure films, followed by juvenile entertainment. IFPI, the dominant organization of video wholesalers, reported a volume of approx. 690,000 cassettes in 1989: 70 per cent action-adventure and drama and 30 per cent cartoons and films for juvenile audiences.
28. Swedish Television (1990b).
29. These 'integrated' film companies abandoned production in the 1970s, choosing to concentrate on more profitable distribution. In fact, the companies' profits grew in the years after television came on the scene. Today, virtually

all Swedish films are produced by 'independents' in collaboration with the Swedish Film Institute and other institutions, both Swedish and foreign.

30. In the early 1980s 'video nasties' were the subject of intense public debate ('moral panic'), and demands were put forward for the scrutiny of film cassettes prior to distribution. These demands were rejected, but legislation against video violence was introduced in 1982. Purveyors of the most sordid video titles can now be prosecuted in the courts.
31. In the discussion that follows, 'cinema' denotes cinemas that offer six or more screenings per week.
32. No comprehensive statistics on the number and activities of cineastic clubs in Sweden are available. The annual report of the SFI for 1988/89 reports 1,141 screenings of repertory film in the Institute's programmes in Sweden's three cities (80 per cent in Stockholm). These attracted 83,617 viewers (90 per cent in Stockholm). SFI's Cinematek clubs had over 13,000 members in 1988/89. In addition SFI showed 30 films for its young people's film club (1,200 members in four communities). A Film Studio network of 108 chapters in 105 communities (with approx. 11,500 members) arranges weekly screenings about 20 weeks of the year. Both SFI and Film Studio show a decline in membership over the 1980s. These are the largest cineastic organizations, but they are not alone. Youth clubs — community-sponsored and affiliates of major popular movements (see note 6) — are another principal outlet for films.
33. In 1980/86, 6 per cent of Swedish households had VCRs; the figure in 1985/86 had climbed to 32 per cent (47 per cent in 1989). Videograms have a special appeal for young people in that groups can share the cost of a video rental — an appeal that grows as ticket prices continue to rise.
34. Figures have varied but, apart from a slump in 1973–1979, there is no clear trend. The corresponding figures for the 1980s are 17.5 and 20.6 per cent.

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Video-cassette recorders in Ghana: impact on press freedom in sub-Saharan Africa

S. T. Kwame Boafo

Introduction

A remarkable feature of the latter half of the twentieth century is the phenomenal growth rate of new communication technology. This rapidly-evolving technology ensures a quick and instantaneous information flow across the world while extending the communication pattern in different societies. New technologies in telecommunications, broadcasting and printing have also created greater opportunities for information flow among the world community. At the microcosmic level, the new technologies of satellite broadcasting, electronic printing, cable networks, telex, teletex, videotex systems, facsimile, digital telephony, telematics and video are enhancing access to multifarious communication sources and messages.[1]

There are ample manifestations that the next century will be dominated by new communication technology that could accentuate the technological and information gap between the industrialized world and much of the developing world, especially the poor societies in Africa south of the Sahara. Sub-Saharan Africa is generally at the periphery of the communication revolution. However, the new technologies are gradually creeping into the region, and urbanized areas, particularly capitals such as Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, Harare in Zimbabwe, Lagos in Nigeria, Nairobi in Kenya and many others are increasingly exhibiting signs of the technological revolution.

As elsewhere, new communication technologies in African countries offer opportunities and possibilities for increased information flow within and between nations. They also have the long-term potential of changing the national communication environment in African countries, some of the most prominent features of which are state domination and government regulations. Because of their capacity to offer varied sources and channels of communication, the new technologies also have the potential of liberating the individual from government restrictions on information flow and broadening freedom of choice and access to various sources of information.

A new communication phenomenon of particular significance in the sub-Saharan African region is the video-cassette recorder (VCR). Compared to other developing regions like the Middle East and Asia, the spread of the VCR in sub-Saharan Africa is limited. However, of all new communication technologies that have entered the region, video seems to have found the most extensive use. Thus, the video phenomenon appears to be an appropriate area for investigating the impact of new communication technologies on press freedom and censorship issues in Africa. Video offers the opportunity for greater access to and choice of programmes than the normally single-channel television broadcasting systems and the limited cinema potential of most African countries. Yet increasing government opposition to the presence or use of VCRs has been marked by attempts to either extend existing regulations to cover the new technology or to formulate new ones to restrict its use and minimize its influence on society.

This study

The question of the impact of new communication technologies on the communication environment in sub-Saharan African countries, with particular reference to enhanced access to communication messages, press freedom and censorship, is the subject of this report. The report uses a case study of VCRs in Ghana to examine the impact of new communication technologies on access to information and entertainment programmes, press freedom and censorship in the region. The objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify and describe the evolution of new communication technologies in sub-Saharan Africa, with particular reference to Ghana and a specific focus on VCRs.
2. Assess the perception, among a selected number of VCR owners and observers of the communication scene in Ghana, of the freedom which the technology offers with regard to the flow of information and entertainment in society.
3. Identify and describe regulations on the utilization of VCRs in the country.
4. Examine and discuss how press freedom and censorship issues affect the use of and regulations concerning VCRs.

The report also describes the communication environment in Ghana and attempts to situate communication developments in the country in the context of the evolution of new communication technologies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Research method

Primary data for the present study were collected with the help of some of the staff and students of the School of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana. They were submitted to two categories of respondents. The sample size for both categories was kept small because of financial constraints.

Both sets of questionnaires were distributed in Accra in April 1989. They were designed to elicit information, *inter alia,* on (a) the uses of video-cassette equipment; (b) perception among VCR owners and observers of the national communication scene of the freedom that video offers in terms of access to information and entertainment programmes, and (c) views on government attempts to regulate the utilization of VCRs in the country. They also sought to gather data on some socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

The secondary data were collected through a review of publications on press freedom and censorship issues, especially in Ghana, and examinations of documents and other materials concerning regulations on the utilization of VCRs in the country.

Press freedom and censorship in sub-Saharan Africa

In recent years, numerous international communication scholars have analysed the socio-economic, political and cultural implications for developing countries of the information revolution and the rapidly-emerging new communication technologies. On the one hand, some critics focus on the threat posed by the technologies to the national sovereignty, independence and cultural autonomy of developing countries. On the other, more optimistic scholars see the new technologies as presenting ideal opportunities for Third World societies to leapfrog the development process into the information age.[2] Yet another group of scholars exult over the ability of new communication technologies to 'promote participatory democracy and decentralization, broaden the spectrum of choice, increase global interaction, expand the reach of information'.[3] The advent and diffusion of new communication technologies have facilitated the global flow of information. As Giffard notes, 'The new technologies have brought about a quantum leap in the ability of people and nations to communicate with each other across time and distance.'[4]

Scenario in sub-Saharan Africa

There are no constant data available on new communication technologies in sub-Saharan Africa, but scattered information in journals, magazines and other publications gives increasing signs of their acquisition and use in the region. Computer technologies are being utilized to process, store, retrieve and disseminate information for government administrative purposes and in industries, parastatal organizations, oil companies, airlines and educational and research institutions in many African countries. Satellite technology and computer-based systems are also used in remote sensing, weather forecasting, water resources management, desertification and locust control as well as in agricultural planning and health care delivery systems.[5]

Likewise, telex and facsimile facilities are assuming increasing importance in such countries as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe for information transmission and reception, although the principal users and beneficiaries are a small segment of the urban population. Also becoming increasingly evident in cities in The Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe among others, is the use of desktop publishing technology for the preparation, editing and printing of publications and reports. Earth satellite stations and microwave facilities in about 41 countries have led to the upgrading of telecommunication infrastructures in the region. In Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, for instance, digital technology is assisting direct telephone exchanges.[6]

Satellite communications technology also forms the fundamental basis of the Regional African Satellite Communication System for Development of Africa (RASCOM) project which was launched in early 1987. The primary aim is to develop 'an efficient, reliable and economical means of telecommunications, including sound and television broadcasting and community reception by satellite, (for) all areas in African countries, using a regional African satellite system'.[7]

Direct satellite broadcasting is also making gradual incursions into the region. For instance, in April 1989, the French television network, Canal France International, started (on an experimental basis) a daily four-hour direct satellite transmission via Intelsat-V to television stations in 24 French- and Portuguese-speaking countries in the region, e.g. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Niger and Senegal.[8] Similarly, *African Concord* on 21 October 1988 reported arrangements made in July 1988 by the US-based Cable News Network (CNN) with a private television network in Nigeria — Begue Broadcasting Network — to market its programmes via satellite transmission in that country. Providing as it does for reception of CNN feeds in Nigeria (a test run of which started in September 1988), this is regarded by CNN 'as a good start to breaking through the difficult terrain of marketing their programmes via satellites in Africa'.[9] A number of wealthy persons there, especially in the national capital, Lagos, have installed television receiver-only dishes. However, Abdullahi (1988) notes that the government 'proclaimed the private ownership of satellite dishes or antennas illegal, claiming that it would tamper with national security.'[10]

But the most widespread new communication technology in most sub-Saharan African countries seems to be the VCR, which found its way into the region in the late 1970s. When related to the situation elsewhere in the world, the scale of diffusion of video technology in African societies is limited. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of urban households in the region possess VCRs. Indeed, among the higher and middle-income groups in urban Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania, for instance, a VCR is perceived as an essential property in the home.[11] But exposure to video goes beyond the number of households that actually own VCRs. A significant feature of video in the region is the development and spread of video clubs, theatres and parlours in Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

The dual effect of this development is that a growing number of people in both urban and rural areas are experiencing the video phenomenon and, as Nahdi puts it, video technology has achieved 'a relative democratization in the African society, the way that neither radio nor television has.'[12] As he indicates, in many countries in the region, video lending libraries and parlours are run by people with no previous experience of films or television. He observes:

> The video revolution has also launched enterprising people in fields which until a couple of years ago were unaffected by the development of the video and television technology. It has led to a growing tribe of photographers turned videographers. In every major town there is now a 'videoman', as it has become the in-thing to record marriages, festivals and parties on video cassettes.[13]

In response to the gradual diffusion of video technology in the region, many African governments have enacted legislation to deal with issues generated by video such as: payment of custom duties and taxes related to imports; registration of video renting agencies; video clubs and theatres; and prohibition of undesirable pornographic and violent programmes. For example, the Tanzania Government's initial reaction to video was to formulate legislation in an attempt to restrict its import. According to Nahdi, in early 1983, as part of the Government's 'war against economic saboteurs' and crackdown on illegal imports, the police and party activists entered people's homes and arrested anybody found with a VCR. He estimates that about 2000 VCRs were confiscated by the authorities that year.[14] However, the restrictions were lifted in June 1983 and replaced with a massive luxury import duty and annual license fee.[15]

In August 1985, the Kenyan Government also passed a law which required video renting libraries to register as businesses and imposed sales tax and other duties for VCR and videotape renting.[16] Again in May 1988, the Government issued new regulations requiring all video renting libraries to submit a list of their cassettes for review and in August that year prohibited both public and private exhibition of about 200 video films regarded as indecent, immoral, violent or subversive.[17] However, the regulations seemed to have been ineffectively enforced and in April 1989, while reporting an estimated annual loss of revenue of Kshs 50 million (about US$ 2.5 million) through illegal video renting business, the Government announced new video regulations. These mandated censorship of video-tape films hired out for home viewing or public exhibition in video halls to determine the appropriate audience category for each film. Each videocassette was required to bear censorship labels (purchased from the then Ministry for National Guidance and Political Affairs) indicating that the film had been approved and rated by the Kenya Film Censorship Board.[18]

In effect, VCR regulations in the region are principally aimed at: (a) generating revenue for the government from videocassette hiring and public exhibition of videotape films, and (b) minimizing the negative impact of videotapes on socio-cultural values and norms. However, African governments' reaction to the new video technology also raises issues on freedom and censorship, to which we shall now turn our attention.

Press freedom and censorship

The literature on the dynamics of government-media relations in different political systems contains various concepts and methods of assessing press freedom. Variables that have been found in many studies to characterize and determine press freedom include:

(i) availability of plurality of opinions and viewpoints in the media;
(ii) provision of alternative and diverse sources of information and possibility of choice from these sources;
(iii) diversity of media ownership;
(iv) accessibility to information channels of views critical of the activities, performance and policies of the government and political leaders; and
(v) the ability of the media to assess and reflect public opinion and articulate people's feelings.[19]

Also used to measure press freedom are such indicators as censorship, licensing of newspapers and journalists, government control of newsprint, and legal and extra-legal action taken against journalists. Press freedom is generally regarded as both a principal guarantee and a concrete reflection of freedom of expression in any society. Boyle (1989), for example, has observed that press freedom is 'not a property right of the producers of newspapers, it is a manifestation of the public's right to know'.[20]

In the context of the present study, press freedom is conceptualized not only in terms of freedom of journalistic reporting on governmental performance and the conduct of state affairs, but also of the individual's freedom of access to public communication channels and freedom of choice of messages (including entertainment) from such channels.

Integrally linked to press freedom is the concept of censorship, which is seen as: (a) an interference or encroachment on freedom of the press and expression, and (b) the suppression of views, ideas and thoughts that are critical of, or considered objectionable to, an individual or institution in authority. Scammel defines censorship as:

> the systematic control of the content of any medium or of the media, by means of constitutional, judicial, administrative, financial, or purely physical measures, imposed directly by or with the connivance of the ruling power or a ruling élite.[21]

He argues that censorship is an instrument that assists in the 'attainment, preservation or continuance of somebody's power, whether exercised by an individual, an institution or a state'.[22] In a global analysis of freedom of expression and censorship, the Article 19 Organization identifies the following as some of the variety of censorship mechanisms employed throughout the world: (i) press laws; (ii) prior restraint or prior authorization to public; (iii) post-publication censorship and restrictions on circulation; (iv) closures and banning of publications, organizations or individuals; (v) economic pressures on media such as withdrawal of advertising, and government monopolies on newsprint and other materials essential for media production; (vi) media concentration and ownership; (vii) self-regulating bodies and self-censorship; and (viii) control, constraint and suppression of the supply of information to the media.[23] In the domain of communication systems, the prime targets of these censorship techniques are: newspapers, magazines and other printed matter; film, radio and television broadcasting; telephone communication; and media practitioners.

The subject of press freedom and censorship is one of the most recurring and persistent themes in any presentation on mass media systems in sub-Saharan Africa. No attempt is made here to give a detailed analysis of the subject, as the literature on media systems in the region abounds with studies and detailed treatment of these.[24] Numerous studies have indicated the following as some of the most recognizable elements characterizing the management, operations and functions of media systems in the region: (i) imposition of authoritarian controls on the media; (ii) utilization of communication channels and resources by governing bodies in the majority of countries for self-legitimization, entrenchment and social control; (iii) use of diverse legal, extra-legal, political and economic measures such as newspaper licensing and registration, dismissals, assaults, harassment and intimidation, indiscriminate arrest, detention and imprisonment, as well as proscription of certain publications to muzzle media practitioners and prevent them from offering a plurality of viewpoints on issues of national significance;[25] (iv) constraints on freedom of expression and voicing of independent, alternative views, and restraints on the flow of communication messages presumed by the government to be threatening to political stability, national unity and societal development efforts, and (v) as a corollary, an overall atmosphere of intolerance of transmission through the media or other public information channels of opinions that are critical of official policies, programmes and goals.

In theory, most African political leaders and policy makers profess adherence to the principles enshrined in Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights[26] as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights,[27] and make periodic pronouncements on freedom of the press and of expression in their countries. Moreover, national constitutions in many African countries — Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, for example — contain articles guaranteeing right to freedom of opinion and expression as well as the flow of information and ideas. In reality, however, what pertains in the region is an atmosphere of intolerance and consistent efforts to suppress free expression and publication of opinions that do not conform to government views.

The curbs on expression of alternative views and stringent controls over the media are usually justified with references to the exigencies of development problems in Africa. Some African political leaders and scholars argue that in the face of the debilitating problems of political strife, ethnic prejudices, famine, illiteracy, poverty and the sheer struggle for survival, press freedom is a luxury that can be dispensed with to ensure development in the region.

However, as Boyle observes, rather than challenging development, socio-economic progress and democratic structures, press freedom helps to consolidate and deepen them.[28] Ennals (1986) has remarked that censorship and inhibitions on information flow diminish the right to participate effectively in government as well as stifle ideas and hinder development.[29] Nor does Ansah (1988) see an antithetical relationship between freedom of the press and expression, on the one hand, and national development on the other. He considers as 'outmoded and mechanistic' the concept of development that views freedom of expression as a hindrance to its achievement. In his opinion, 'for the purpose of national development, people should be able to share ideas and discuss freely, exchange views, evaluate alternatives and criticize where necessary'.[30]

Among the principal factors accounting for inhibitions on press freedom and censorship in sub-Saharan Africa are media ownership and management. For example, broadcasting systems in the region are tightly controlled, state-run monopolies. The norm is state ownership, government management and control of radio and television stations. Also, in most African countries, the leading daily and weekly publications are state-owned and government-managed and subsidized. The concentration of ownership of the principal channels for public information in government hands facilitates the exercise of controls over press freedom and censorship of communication messages. State ownership and government control of the dominant communication sources also tend to restrict accessibility of different ideas and viewpoints to the media and stifle cross-sectional participation in information generation and dissemination.

Thus a significant issue concerning the advent of new communication technologies in Africa is whether they will generate democratic principles, decentralization of communication systems and broaden the range of choices and information reach in the society. Parallel in importance to the perceived threat that new communication technologies, especially video, pose to moral and cultural values in the society, is the question of whether these technologies offer the potential of minimizing government controls over communication systems in the region. It would seem that the potential of video and other new communication technology to expand the reach of information, minimize state strictures on communication systems and gradually modify the predominant communication patterns in society has not received much attention. What seems to be of greatest concern to African government officials and policy makers in their response to video technology is both the threat to social, moral and cultural values and the desire that substantial proportions of the revenue accruing from the uses of video should go into state coffers rather than enrich individual entrepreneurs. Exemplifying the reaction to new communication technologies in Africa and its implication for media freedom and censorship is the case of video in Ghana.

Ghana: a brief profile

The socio-political setting

Ghana lies on the West Coast of Africa. Occupying an area of approximately 240,000 square kilometres, it is the second largest of the five English-speaking countries in West Africa. The country's immediate neighbours are all French-speaking: Burkina Faso to the north, Côte d'Ivoire to the west and Togo to the east. To the south is that part of the Atlantic Ocean known as the Gulf of Guinea.

A former British colony under the name of the Gold Coast, Ghana became the first African country south of the Sahara to achieve political independence: that was on 6 March 1957. Since then, the country has witnessed different forms of government, including a socialist single-party republic, a British-style parliamentary democracy, an American-style executive presidency and five military regimes. At present, the country is ruled by its fifth military regime, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) headed by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry J. Rawlings who assumed power on 31 December 1981. In late 1988 and early 1989, the government organized district assembly elections throughout the country as part of its programme to evolve a suitable system of political administration.

The most recent population census, conducted in March 1984, reported the population of Ghana to be 12.2 million, compared with 8.6 million in March 1970. Nearly 50 per cent of the population is under 15 years and 3 per cent is over 65 years. Out of the total population, 68.7 per cent live in rural communities of less than 5,000 persons: the country is 31.3 per cent urbanized.[31] The literacy rate is about 30 per cent, which is higher than the rate in many African countries, although education is unevenly spread throughout the country.

The estimated total number of languages spoken in Ghana is 44 — a linguistic heterogeneity that is not uncommon in sub-Saharan African societies.[32] About 34 of the languages are spoken by small ethnic groups some of which number only a few thousands. Akan is the largest of the major languages; it is spoken or understood by about 60 per cent of the population. Other major indigenous languages are Ga, Adangbe, Ewe, Dagbani, Dagaari, Kassem, Gonja and Nzema. Hausa, though not native to Ghana, is also fairly widely spoken, especially in the Upper East Region, one of the 10 administrative regions. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the population either speak or understand one or more of the major languages. However, English is the principal language used in educational institutions and the print media and for administrative purposes.

The economy

Ghana's economy is mixed, as it comprises elements of both central planning and free market enterprise. The main occupation is agriculture and related activities, which employ about 60 per cent of the total labour force and contribute over 40 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Cocoa is the principal cash-crop and the main export, accounting for 60 per cent of all export earnings. Other major exports are minerals [gold, diamonds, manganese and bauxite] which account for about 15 per cent of export earnings, and logs and sawn timber, 8 per cent.[33]

For its size, the country possesses substantial amounts of human and natural resources which, properly harnessed and managed, could make the country economically prosperous. But from about the late 1960s such factors as recurrent drought, declining agricultural and industrial output, falling export earnings, the rising price of crude oil and inappropriate economic management policies resulted in a serious economic crisis, large budgetary deficits, increasing money supply and a grossly overvalued currency. From the early 1970s until the mid 1980s, Ghana experienced high rates of inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves and an acute shortage of imported consumer goods, raw materials and spare parts for both industrial machinery and household items. A government report in December 1984 described Ghana as 'a resource-rich country, bled, weakened and run down over the years'.[34]

In April 1983, with prompting and assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the ruling PNDC government launched a package of economic policy measures designed to reverse the economic decline and provide an appropriate basis for sustained national economic recovery. The two-phased (1983–1988) Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) was intended mainly to: (i) restore incentives for production of food, industrial raw materials and export commodities; (ii) increase availability of essential consumer goods and improve the distribution system; (iii) lower the rate of inflation by pursuing prudent fiscal, monetary and trade policies; and (iv) rehabilitate the physical infrastructure of the country.[35]

Ghana's ERP and the related Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) are marked by successive devaluation of the national currency, liberalization, privatization, free market principles and massive infusion of foreign aid. ERP and SAP have been acclaimed by the IMF, the World Bank and other foreign donor agencies as one of the most successful economic restructuring and policy reform programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. It has been reported that the past few years have seen a halt in the country's socio-economic decline and marked improvement in its economic performance. Available statistics indicate that between 1984 and 1988, Ghana's economy grew at an estimated 6 per cent per annum and inflation dropped from 123 per cent in 1983 to 20 per cent in 1988. The period also saw increased government revenue, improved balance of payments, increased availability of consumer goods, raw materials and spare parts as well as an average annual growth rate of 14 per cent in manufacturing and 6 per cent in services.[36]

However, a more critical school of thought contends that the impact of the improved economy is not evident in the living conditions of most Ghanaians and that the reported high rates of growth have been achieved at the cost of a swelling external debt burden.

Communication systems

Communication systems in Ghana present a microcosmic picture of the communication environment in sub-Saharan

Africa. As is the case in other African countries, the most significant and widespread mass communication medium in the country is radio. Broadcasting began on 31 July 1935 with a small wired relay station in Accra known as 'Station Zoy'. Initially, the station relayed mainly BBC programmes only to listeners in the city until about 1939 when rediffusion stations were established in other parts of the country. At present, there are 52 relay stations in the country, although a sizeable number do not function effectively.

The national radio station,the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), operates two main channels on its national service, GBC-1 and GBC-2. The former broadcasts programmes in the six principal local languages, namely Akan, Dagbani, Ewe, Ga, Hausa and Nzema, in addition to news, newsreels and news commentaries in English. GBC-2, inaugurated in February 1967, is a commercial channel broadcasting mainly in English. Its programmes consist of news commentaries and discussions as well as music, social announcements and commercials. In addition to the two national stations, GBC operates an external service and three FM stations — in Accra, the national capital; Apam, a small fishing community in the Central Region, and Bolgatanga, the Upper West regional capital.

There are 2.5 million transistor radio sets and 64,000 rediffusion boxes, making a total estimated coverage of 16 radio sets per 100 of the population. The total number of households in the country is estimated to be 2.3 million; thus, in theory, there is an average of one radio set per household. However, in practice, a greater proportion of available radio sets are in the major cities and towns, where only about 31 per cent of the population live.

Television broadcasting was inaugurated on 31 July 1965, 30 years after radio. Television broadcasts, for an average of six hours a day, are mainly in English with a few discussion, entertainment and religious programmes in Akan, Dagbani, Ewe, Ga and Hausa. Transmission and coverage are mainly within the urban centres where the estimated 180,000 sets are concentrated.

Available figures indicate that there are two national daily papers, one tri-weekly and about 60 weeklies, monthlies and other periodicals in the country.[37] Both daily newspapers, the *People's Daily Graphic* (circulation 130,000) and the *Ghanaian Times* (circulation 130,000), and their weekly counterparts, *The Mirror* and the *Weekly Spectator* (each with a circulation of 100,000), are state-owned and government-subsidized. Most of the privately-owned weekly newspapers, monthlies and other periodicals are soft-news-oriented. Their coverage is devoted to sports, entertainment and the national weekly lotto game. Others devote their columns to religion and church-related activities. The majority of the publications are based in Accra. Virtually all are published in English and circulated in the cities and major towns and surroundings. The sole exception is an experimental rural community newspaper *Wonsuom*, which is published in the Fante language and distributed in selected rural communities in Central Region by the School of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana.[38]

All postal, telephone, telex, telegraph and data transmission services are run by the national Posts and Telecommunications Corporation. The country's external telecommunication services were considerably enhanced with the commissioning in August 1981 of an earth satellite station. Satellite technology has made facsimile transmission of information possible and, with the installation of an international telephone switch in 1988, made international direct dialling accessible to telephone users in the country. It has also created opportunities for direct satellite television broadcasting, although this has been limited to such events as the Royal Wedding in 1981, the African Nations Cup Football Competition in Libya in 1983 and the World Cup Competition in Mexico in 1986.

Several features of the communication systems in Ghana, which mirror the situation in many African countries, are worth noting here. Firstly, because of the scarcity and limited geographical distribution of mass media, telecommunications and other modern communication facilities, much of the communication environment of rural Ghana, where most people live, still operates through oral and traditional methods. Secondly, as we have noted elsewhere, the cities, major towns and their environs, where print media, radio and television facilities are concentrated, are the very areas that receive the principal services of cinemas, telecommunications and postal systems and of new communication technologies such as telex, computers and video.[39] Thirdly, as happens elsewhere in the region, state ownership and operation of the dominant mass media — the most important newspapers as well as radio and television stations — give the ruling body considerable leverage over communication content and information dissemination and continually raise questions of press freedom and censorship.

Press freedom and censorship in Ghana

The history of government-media relations in post-independence Ghana presents an interesting case-study of the consistency of governments in sub-Saharan Africa using diverse censorship measures to subject the media under their control and inhibit press freedom. Analysis of government-media relations since 1957 shows that the media in Ghana experienced strict authoritarianism under Kwame Nkrumah (1957–66), 'paternalistic authoritarianism' during the administration of the National Liberation Council (1966–69), and tight restrictions in the era of the National Redemption Council, later renamed the Supreme Military Council (I and II) from 1972 to 1979. The media enjoyed a more tolerant and libertarian atmosphere only during the short-lived Kofi Busia Government (1969–72), and more especially in the Hilla Liman era (1979–82), when censorship was outlawed and freedom of the press and expression were buttressed by constitutional guarantees.[40]

The period since December 1981, when the present military government led by Jerry Rawlings came to power, has been marked by attempts to impose stringent controls on press freedom and free expression.[41] We have noted elsewhere[42] that among the most systematically exercised overt and covert press control and censorship mechanisms in Ghana are: (i) appointment to, and instant dismissal from, the editorial chairs and top management echelons of state-owned mass communication media; (ii) intimidation and physical harassment of editors, journalists and other practitioners of privately-owned newspapers and other publications; (iii) both outright censorship and extreme self-censorship of editorial comments, views and ideas that are critical of, and not in consonance with, the official line of thinking; (iv) regular seminars and briefings organized for media practitioners and official declarations on the need for the media to 'cooperate' with the Government in building the nation; (v) withholding from the media of information on significant public issues, and 'rumour-mongering' decrees that make it an offence to publish anything that could be deemed to be rumour.

Also regularly employed are legislative instruments that ban or prohibit the publication and circulation of newspapers and magazines considered 'undesirable' by the Government. The most recent of these is the Newspaper Licensing Law (PNDC Law 211) of 27 March 1989. Under the law, persons seeking to print, publish or circulate any newspaper, magazine or journal in the country have to obtain an annual renewable license from the Secretary for Information. The Secretary, 'if he deems fit, may revoke or suspend such a license by an executive instrument for a period of time if a holder fails to comply with any requirement, provision or prohibition imposed by or under the law'.[43] The law further stipulates that failure to comply with the requirements, provisions, conditions or prohibitions under it is an offence punishable by a fine not exceeding ¢500,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both. The law appears to be a resurrection of the 1963 Newspaper Licensing Act passed during the Nkrumah era, reinstated by the National Redemption Council in 1973, but abolished under the abrogated 1979 Constitution. It brings into prominence the limitations on the breadth and latitude of press freedom and the extent of censorship in Ghanaian society.

Press control and censorship measures in Ghana are not atypical of the situation prevailing in most other countries of sub-Saharan Africa. It would seem that political leaders in Ghana and elsewhere in the region regard monolithic conformity and uniformity of viewpoints as the most appropriate path to national development and political stability. The overall effect of the censorship measures and suppression of press freedom in Ghana has been an environment characterized by a one-sided presentation of official views, to the exclusion of others, a culture of silence and reticence as well as 'a general reluctance on the part of most Ghanaians to express their opinions on political issues.'[44] Presenting an overview of press freedom and censorship in the country, *African Concord* concludes that, with only minor exceptions, 'freedom of the press in Ghana has always depended on what the government wanted the citizens to know and how they should know it.'[45] It is in the context of lack of access to public information channels of varied and alternative communication messages, and the generally limited diversity of communication sources in Ghana, that the potential of new communication technologies should be analysed.

Video-cassette recorders in Ghana: diversity, regulations and censorship

The video-cassette recorder scene[46]

As elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, video-cassette recorders (VCRs) are a very recent communication technological phenomenon in Ghanaian society. The exact date when the first VCRs were imported into the country is difficult to establish with any degree of certainty, as accurate information on the issue is unavailable. But customs officials in Accra estimate that video-cassette equipment first found its way into Ghana towards the end of the 1970s.

VCRs are imported into the country mainly by expatriates and Ghanaians who have access to foreign exchange or are returning home after a period of stay abroad. Recorders are also retailed on the domestic market, although at steep prices which make them an electronic luxury that only the affluent, privileged urban élite and expatriates can afford. There are no precise figures on the number of homes in the country that own video-cassette recorders. However, judging from the number of television sets in the country (one per cent of the population of 12.2 million),[47] one may say that the scale of VCR ownership is negligible.

But the most discernible feature of the video scene in Ghana is not the private ownership of VCRs but rather the development and growth of video theatres where films on videotape are shown commercially. As in conventional cinemas, the public is admitted on payment of an admission fee (averaging ¢30 per show). The development and spread of video theatres in many parts of the country — especially in urban areas — have opened up access to VCRs and extended the 'video experience' to the less affluent population segment. With video theatres and commercial showing of video-cassette tapes, exposure to films on videotapes goes far beyond the small number of homes or individuals who are actually VCR owners.

The development of video theatres in Ghana began in the second half of 1981 when a mere half dozen opened in the capital, Accra. By the mid-1980s, however, the operation of video theatres had become a lucrative and booming business for local entrepreneurs. It attained considerable growth, spreading rapidly to other major cities and towns, although there is a heavy concentration in the Accra-metropolitan area and Kumasi, the country's second largest city. Officials at the Ministry of Information estimate that by 1988 there were over 2000 video theatres in the country, although only a few of them had been officially registered.

The rapid growth in the number of video theatres may be attributed to: (a) the inability of the 110 cinemas in the country to satisfy the desire of movie-goers for more recent films; (b) the increasing patronage given to video theatres, especially by young people, because of their novelty, and because video theatres are seen as convenient entertainment outlets, usually in one's own neighbourhood; and (c) the relatively low cost of setting up a video theatre as compared with that of a conventional cinema house: all that is required is the VCR, a television screen or projection device, a small space, a few chairs and some pre-recorded video-cassette tapes.

The growth of video theatres in the country appears to have posed three basic problems: (i) theatres exhibited films on pre-recorded videotapes that were mostly pirated and thus violated copyright provisions in Ghana as well as international copyright laws to which Ghana is a signatory; (ii) by exhibiting films which had not been censored and certified, theatres violated cinematograph laws in the country and exposed the Ghanaian public to films that were deemed unsuitable for certain audiences and harmful to cultural and social values; (iii) video theatres had become a profitable business but, since most of them were not registered as business concerns, the central government did not receive much revenue from them as income taxes and other duties were unpaid.

Faced with these problems, the Ministry of Information drafted a set of regulations to control the operations of video theatres and renting libraries in the country. Their purpose seems to be to halt the spread of video theatres and minimize their socio-cultural influence, while making them conform to copyright and other statutory requirements, in particular laws relating to the entertainment business.

VCR regulations

On 10 September 1983, the national daily newspapers carried a news release from the Ministry of Information, signed by the Information Secretary, setting out the regulations governing video theatres, renting libraries and recording studios. They laid down the conditions that video proprietors had to fulfil to legalize their operations, as follows: (i) films for commercial exhibition should receive prior authorization from the legitimate copyright owners in accordance with provisions of the Copyright Act of 1961;[48] (ii) films to be exhibited at video theatres should have been submitted to and passed by the Film Censorship Board in compliance with the Cinematograph Act of 1961, as amended by the Cinematograph (Amendment) Decree, N.R.C.D. 350, 1975; (iii) premises to be used for video exhibitions should be licensed by the Inspector General of Police in accordance with the relevant provision of the Cinematograph Act of 1961 as amended; and (iv) exhibitors of cinematograph films such as videotapes should pay a prescribed percentage of the fees collected as duty to the Central Revenue Department as stipulated under the Entertainment Duty Act of 1962.[49]

Another news release from the Ministry of Information, published in the national dailies on 20 April 1984, detailed the procedures for censorship of films on video cassettes to be exhibited commercially. Proprietors of video theatres and renting libraries throughout the country were now required to: (i) submit a list of video cassettes to be censored to the Office of the Copyright Administrator, Ministry of Information; the list should be accompanied by photocopies of the following documents: (a) the operator's/hirer's company registration certificate; (b) income tax clearance certificate; and (c) certificate of registration as a video centre issued by the police; (ii) make an annual contribution of ¢2,000[50] and ¢12,000 respectively to a Copyright Office Fund established by the Ministry of Information before his or her cassettes are censored; since 1984 the annual contributions have been revised as follows: (a) renting libraries with collections of 1000 or more cassettes: ¢50,000, (b) libraries with collections of 500 to 1000 cassettes: ¢30,000; (c) libraries with collections of less than 500 cassettes: ¢15,000; and (d) exhibitors of video theatres: ¢5,000; (iii) pay a censorship fee of ¢200 on each cassette and a certificate fee of ¢20 on each censored title (the censorship fee has been revised to ¢1,000 for each video cassette); and (iv) obtain a certificate of censorship for every cassette to be made available for inspection by the staff of the Inspectorate Division of the Cinema Section of the Information Services Department, the Police or the local People's Defence Committee (now Committee for the Defence of the Revolution).[51]

In February 1985, the Ministry of Information issued additional requirements for video theatre operation. These stated that: (i) only original video tapes should be exhibited; use of unauthorized duplicate or pirated copies was prohibited; (ii) tapes for commercial exhibition should be hired only from video libraries and clubs approved by the Ministry; and (iii) whenever the legitimate copyright owner of a cassette film was identified after the granting of approval, the video theatre proprietor would be required to pay additional royalties to him.

No formal channels have been established specifically to implement the video regulations. Rather, three existing institutions are requested to ensure that proprietors of video theatres and renting libraries adhere to the requirements of the regulations. These are the police, local Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, and the Cinema Section of the Information Services Department. Persons from these institutions are authorized to visit video theatres to demand, as proof of compliance with the regulations: (a) a certificate of registration indicating that the premises have been licensed for public exhibition of films on video tapes; (b) admission tickets purchased from the Central Revenue Department; (c) an income tax clearance certificate; (d) a letter from the Information Services Department indicating that the films to be shown have been censored; and (e) a letter from the Ministry of Information on the copyright status of the films to be exhibited.

VCR censorship

Strictly speaking the video regulations are mainly an amalgam of the existing requirements concerning the entertainment business in Ghana. They are an attempt to respond to the exigencies generated by the use made of video-cassette recorders and tapes as part of new communication technology.

The regulations require proprietors of video theatres and renting libraries to submit all videotapes for commercial exhibition for censorship by the Cinematograph Exhibition Board of Control (the Film Censorship Board) in Accra. The Board, originally set up under the Cinematograph Act of 1961 to censor films for exhibition in public cinemas, censors films on video tapes according to the same criteria as films on celluloid.

It is authorized to reject films that may offend the religious sensibility of any sect, or cause or strengthen racial misunderstandings or hostility, or which are offensive to generally accepted standards of decency. It is also authorized to censor or excise materials in films that are perceived to violate good taste, social and moral values, such as scenes depicting explicit sex, violence, crime, brutality against women, or scenes in which Africans play an inferior role.[52]

The Film Censorship Board is composed of representatives of different ministries, religious bodies, police and armed forces, children's, youth and women's organizations, trade unions and writers' and teachers' associations. In a sense, it is a statutory body set up to guard public values against the negative effects of films shown publicly. The ostensible purpose of film censorship in Ghana, as in many other countries in the region, would seem to be to ensure that films screened before the public do not impair social, moral and cultural values.

Among other factors the desire to minimize the potential negative impact of video technology on the moral and cultural fabric of Ghanaian society seems to have motivated the extension of conventional film censorship to video-cassette films.[53] In the wake of the rapid growth of video theatres in the country, their possible social impact has been disquieting to many people. Concern about the potential negative effects of exposure to uncensored video-cassette films has been expressed in many ways.

In a meeting with video theatre proprietors in Accra on 15 September 1983, the Secretary for Information expressed government concern about the showing of pornographic and violent films at video theatres which were 'undermining the moral standards' of the country. In May 1984, when inaugurating the reconstituted Cinematograph Exhibition Board of Control in Accra, the Under-Secretary of Information spoke of films depicting sex, violence and crime being shown at video theatres, and of their impact on Ghanaian society. He noted that most films screened in cinemas and video theatres portray other societies and subtly create needs and values that do not correspond to the level of development in the country.[54]

Similarly, in September 1984, participants at a colloquium in Accra on 'Film and Video Censorship: Ghanaian Social Values and Ghanaian Youth' noted the need to safeguard Ghanaian social values and norms against the negative effects of foreign films being shown at video theatres. The speakers argued that exposure to certain kinds of influence on videotapes could make Ghanaian youth adopt norms, beliefs and life-styles that were incompatible with the country's social values. The consensus at the forum was that the way to deal with such negative effects was strict censorship of undesirable films or aspects of films that were deemed unsuitable for public exhibition.

The national media also took up the issue of the impact of video theatres on Ghanaian social and moral values. To illustrate, in an editorial comment in 1984 the *People's Daily Graphic* made a strident attack on video theatres, observing that most of them 'pander to people's most prurient instincts by showing artless sex and violence' and serve as 'centres for disseminating decadent Western cultural values'.[55] In 1985, the same newspaper referred to the increase in unauthorized video theatres in rural communities and commented that video shows were 'corrupting and destroying the ideals and values of our heritage as well as bending the moral fibre of our youth'.[56]

In mid-1986, when general concern was expressed about the patronage of video theatres by schoolchildren and its adverse effect on school attendance and the morals of youth, the Ministry of Information issued a ban on afternoon operation of video theatres. However, reflecting on the general weakness in implementing the video regulations, the ban was neither effectively nor vigorously enforced. Thus, two years after the ban had been issued, a small-scale survey carried out in Accra by the Ghana News Agency indicated that many proprietors of video theatres were contravening the regulation. The survey reported that among those who patronize day-time video film shows were young schoolchildren (aged 5–15 years), school drop-outs and government employees.[57]

In response to the mounting concern about this situation (from both individuals and such pressure groups as the Christian Council, the Muslim Representative Council and women's organizations), the Ministry of Information published additional regulations on video theatres in September 1988. These: (a) restricted video shows to between 6 and 11 p.m. on weekdays and from noon until midnight at weekends; (b) required film titles to be displayed outside premises, with clear indication of the rating 'X', 'A' or 'U';[58] (c) stipulated that children under 18 years should not be allowed in or permitted to loiter around the premises, and (d) required video theatre operators to ensure, among other things, that the premises were well-ventilated and had adequate toilet facilities.

Video: variety of choice

The impetus to enforce regulations and impose video censorship appears to have been strengthened by an outcry among sections of the Ghanaian population against the potentially negative effects of video on society. However, the regulations also raise questions of media freedom and censorship. In an earlier section, we observed that among elements characterizing press freedom are the provision of alternative and diverse sources of information and the possibility of choice available to the individual. We also conceptualized press freedom as being not merely the property right of journalists and other media practitioners but also the individual's right of access to a variety of communication sources and freedom of choice of messages (including entertainment) from such sources.

New communication technologies in Ghana, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan African societies, have the potential to modify the predominant patterns of communication systems by minimizing government control of media content and offering a diversity of choice to the individual. This potential is at present most evident in the multiplicity of entertainment programmes that video has generated in Ghanaian society. The advent of video in the country has provided a wider choice of media entertainment programmes and has lessened dependence on conventional cinemas and the State-owned single-channel television station. The latter operates for an average of six hours a day, generally providing monotonous, dull and often boring programmes, Also, because of lack of foreign exchange potential, films on celluloid imported and exhibited in most of the 110 cinema theatres throughout the country tend to be outdated Indian, Chinese and Western fare.

Data collected in interviews with 70 respondents point to a genuine awareness that video technology provides freedom to select from a wide range of films and other entertainment fare, with the long-term possibility of diversifying and offering alternative sources of information to the public.

The interviews were conducted in the capital, Accra, in April 1989. The respondents were 20 'observers of the communication scene' in Ghana and 50 others who own or have VCRs in their homes. The respondent group, categorized as 'observers of the communication scene', comprised researchers and scholars in communication education institutions, information officers, senior media practitioners and others involved in media activities. The group consisted of 15 male and five female correspondents; their ages ranged from 29 to 57, the mean age being 37 years. The 50 respondents classified as 'video owners' were mostly civil servants, businessmen and housewives, although a few were students in secondary or university institutions. On average, this category of respondents had secondary level education or higher, and their ages ranged from 18 to 55, with a mean age of 35 years. There were 26 male and 24 female respondents in this group.

Of the 50 respondents who have video in their homes, 21 (42 per cent) watch every day, 15 (30 per cent) watch at least once a week and the remaining 14 (28 per cent) watch less often. They usually watch American or Western 'spy' or detective films and musicals, although they also occasionally watch sports or war and religious films. People who have videos in their homes rarely visit cinemas. Most of the respondents (41 or 82 per cent) have either never been to the cinema or attend only occasionally. On the other hand, 40 (80 per cent) of those interviewed watch films and other entertainment programmes such as local drama on the national television at least once a week. However, the films shown on television are usually old American or German docu-drama such as 'Hawaii Five O', 'Derreck' and 'Old Fox'.

The general view among both the 'observers' and 'video owners' groups of respondents was that video has diversified entertainment fare by providing Ghanaians with an opportunity to see films and other entertainment programmes that cannot be, or are not, shown on the national television or in the cinemas. Video owners feel that it provides them with a rich source of entertainment that is alternative to, and in many ways better than, what is on offer in the cinemas and on television. Virtually all respondents (63 or 90 per cent) said video gives access to a variety of films and different entertainment programmes. As a 35-year-old housewife observed, 'whereas I can rent as many as seven video films a week, the nearest film house shows only one outdated film for a whole week and at times a whole month.' Another respondent remarked that while there is limited choice in the cinemas and on television, video provides the chance to choose as many different films as one wants to see or can afford to rent.

Only three respondents were of the opinion that the Government should control the importation of video-cassette recorders into the country. In the view of most other respondents, controlling the importation of videos would restrict access to information and entertainment and inhibit the exploitation of the technology for development. A communication scholar observed that 'there should be no restriction on the acquisition of knowledge. Everyone must have access to information.' However, most 'observers' and 'video owners' interviewed (53 or 76 per cent) thought that some control of video films, especially those with a pornographic or violent content, is necessary to ensure that what is exhibited does not impair the cultural and moral values of Ghanaian society. But the opinion was also expressed that control of videotape films restricts the right of choice and that any control should be exercised by individuals or video operators and not by the Government.

In addition to the perception of video as providing freedom to select from a variety of films and other entertainment programmes, many of the 70 respondents (37 or 53 per cent) were also of the opinion that the technology could serve as an alternative source of news and information. It was suggested, for example, that video could be used to provide 'realistic and detailed information', not only about significant national and international events but also about the problems of the rural population, development projects and achievements of small communities and national cultures. Such recorded videotapes might be shown in video theatres or ad hoc community video centres, besides being made available at rental centres. However, there was generally-expressed scepticism as to whether the present political climate in Ghana would be favourable to such airing of views, particularly those that were political in tone and critical of official policies and programmes.

Summary and conclusions

The latter half of the twentieth century has seen a phenomenal growth in new communication technology. At the international level, the new communication technologies have created greater opportunities for information circulation and exchange in the world community. They have facilitated rapid and instantaneous news and information flow between different regions and extended the communication milieu in many societies. Although sub-Saharan African countries are generally at the periphery of the communication revolution, there are increasing signs that the new technologies are gradually investing the region. Satellite and computer-based systems, telex, facsimile, video and desktop publishing facilities are all finding their way into many African countries.

Their capacity to offer a variety of communication sources and channels provides these new technologies with the potential to liberate the individual from government restrictions on information flow and broaden freedom of choice and access to diverse sources of information. This is apparent above all in the diversity of choice and multiplicity of entertainment programmes generated by video in many sub-Saharan African societies. Video technology also means freedom from rigidly controlled media systems. It enables people to choose the place and schedule for viewing according to their taste. On the whole, however, government reaction to the video phenomenon has been marked by attempts to impose censorship on the new technology in order to restrict its uses and minimize its potential influence in society.

The present study of VCRs in Ghana is an attempt to examine the impact of the new communication technologies on access to information and entertainment programmes, press freedom and censorship in the sub-Saharan African region. It outlines the regulations on the use of VCRs in Ghana and analyses their relationship to press freedom and censorship. It also attempts to assess, among a number of observers of the communication scene in the country and a number of VCR owners, the perception of freedom that the technology offers with regard to entertainment programmes and news and information dissemination. Data collected in the course of interviews with 70 respondents bear out the general view that video has diversified entertainment fare by allowing Ghanaians to see films and other entertainments that are not available on national television or in cinemas.

New communication technologies have a potential for democratizing and decentralizing communication systems, diversifying information sources and broadening the range of choice and information reach in sub-Saharan Africa. However, whether this potential can be nurtured or smothered depends on such variables as the attitude of the ruling body towards the new technologies and the dominant political environment in society. Even where authoritarian controls and censorship are exercised over existing media systems, efforts will still be made to incorporate the new technologies. However, the gradual diffusion of new communication technologies in the region will, in the long term, undermine the effective implementation of government regulations and controls. At present, this is particularly evident in the ineffective attempts to implement VCR regulations and censorship in Ghana and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. And the difficulty in exercising government control over communication systems will continue as other new technologies come into widespread use. Long-term implications of the advent of new communication technologies in African countries would then appear to be diversification of communication sources, extension of information reach, gradual transformation of communication systems and minimization of government controls.

Thus, although there is little evidence at present to suggest that video, for example, is being used to carry underground political messages as happened, say, in the Philippines at the time of the assassination of opposition leader Beningno Acquino and the people's revolution that swept Ferdinand Marcos from power,[59] the possibility exists that, as video and other new communication technologies become more common in the region, segments of the population will use them to supplement or even as substitutes for the news given out by the national mass media. Attempts to restrict the distribution of materials with an 'objectionable' or 'undesirable' content, as in the case of pornographic or violent material, will become increasingly futile. By giving the individual the option to choose from a wide variety of available materials, video technology makes it difficult, if not impossible, for national decision-makers to control or eliminate undesirable communication messages. As Guptara (1985) has observed, communication technology development will make censorship more and more difficult, particularly in developing countries.[60] He notes:

> It is relatively easy to censor what is published or circulated in printed form, or indeed in broadcast form; it is relatively difficult to censor the use of video and audiocassettes, multiple copies of which can be reproduced fairly conveniently and quickly by anyone who possesses (the) equipment...[61]

In the main, the present study has confined itself to the impact of a single new communication technology in one country of sub-Saharan Africa. It has necessarily been exploratory and probing, although its observations and conclusions may well be applied to many other African societies. However, further investigation is necessary to explore the relationship between the advent and diffusion of new communication technologies and variables such as diversification of communication sources, expansion of information reach and choice, and minimization or maximization of government control over communication systems in the region.

Indeed, African communication scholars, researchers and policy-makers need to examine the extent to which new communication technologies can be utilized to promote participation in and discussion of issues of national importance and the requisite measures to facilitate this process. As Nelson (1988) has remarked, while new communication technologies can enhance national information resources, they will be meaningful to national development only if they are accorded adequate space to play a crucial role in the decision-making process and have a place in national planning activities.[62] Effective citizen participation in decision-making and development planning calls for accessibility to information and varied information sources as well as freedom of choice — possibilities which new communication technologies can be harnessed to provide.

Notes

1. A description of new communication technologies may be found in, for example, R. Brown, 'New Technologies in Communication: A General Description', *Media Development*, 30, 4, pp. 3–7; B. Maddox, 'The Born-Again Technology', T*he Economist*, 22 August 1981, pp. 3–4, 6–7, 10–21; F. Williams, *The Communications Revolution*, Beverly Hills, Calif., Sage, 1982.
2. The range of critical studies on the implications of new communication technologies for the developing world includes, for example, Jorg Becker *et al.* (eds.), *Communication and Domination: Essays to Honour Herbert I. Schiller*, Norwood, N.J., Ablex, 1986; C. J. Hamelink, *Cultural Autonomy in Global Communication*, New York, Longman, 1983; K. Nordenstreng and H. I. Schiller (eds.), *National Sovereignty and International Communication: A Reader*, Norwood, N. J., Ablex, 1979; A. Smith, *Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the World*, London, Faber and Faber, 1980; M. Traber (ed.), *The Myth of the Information Revolution: Social and Ethical Implications of Communication Technology*, London, Sage, 1986; L. U. Uche, 'Mass Communication

and Cultural Identity: The Unresolved Issues of National Sovereignty and Cultural Autonomy in the Wake of New Communication Technologies', *Africa Media Review*, 3, 1, 1988, pp. 83–105.

3. A. Mehra, 'Harnessing New Communication Technologies for Development in Asia', *Media Asia*, 15, 2, 1988, pp. 63–7.
4. A. C. Giffard, 'The Myth of New Communication Technologies as a Quick Fix for Information Imbalances', *KEIO Communication Review*, 8, 1987, pp. 75–89.
5. See, for example, N. Middleton, 'Space Age Control of an Ancient Plague', *South*, September 1988, p. 93; 'Computers in Action: Harnessing IT for Health', *Computers in Africa*, 3, 2, 1989, pp. 30–3; 'Nigeria's Parastatals Turn to Computers', *Computers in Africa*, 2, 6, 1988, pp. 12–13; 'Ghana: Economic Recovery Fuels Computer Fever', *Computers in Africa*, 3, 1, 1989, pp. 12–13; E. Nelson, 'The Computer Invasion', *African Concord*, 31 May 1988, p. 5.
6. See, for example, 'Rural Kenya Switches to Digital Technology', *Computers in Africa*, 2, 6, 1988, pp. 14–16.
7. R. M. Yusuf, 'The RASCOM Project: A New Dimension for PNAFTEL,' *Telecommunication*, 22, 2, 1988, pp. 61-7.
8. Reported in *La Gazette de la presse de langue française*, 49, March-April 1989, p. 5.
9. 'Bringing Africa to the World and the World to Africa by Satellite Television', *African Concord*, October 21–7, 1988, p. 24.
10. A. Abdullahi, 'The DBN is not so Private', *African Concord*, Nov. 11–17, 1988, p. 26.
11. See, for example, S. Olusola, 'Nigeria: The Video Shock', *Inter Media*, 11, 415, 1983, p. 64; D. Cameroun, 'Africa: Videos Preferred to Presidents', *Index on Censorship*, 15, 3, 1986, p. 22.
12. F. Nahdi, 'Tanzania: VCR is King', *African Events*, December 1987, pp. 65–6.
13. Ibid., p. 66.
14. Ibid.
15. L. A. Ngatara, 'Tanzania: Economy Down, Video Up', *Inter Media*, 11, 415, 1983, p. 71.
16. See 'Law on Videotapes Hiring Fees Passed,' *Daily Nation*, 31 August 1985, p. 1.
17. See '193 Video Titles Banned', *The Standard*, 6 August 1988, pp. 1–7.
18. See 'State Robbed in Video Trade: New Regulations to Plug Loopholes', *Daily Nation*, 21 April 1989. p. 11.
19. See, for example, R. B. Nixon, 'Factors Related to Freedom in National Press Systems', *Journalism Quarterly*, 37, 1, 1960, pp. 13–28; V. Farace and L. Donohew, 'Mass Communication in National Social Systems: A Study of 43 Variables in 155 Countries', *Journalism Quarterly*, 42, 2, 1965, pp. 253–61; R. L. Lowenstein, 'Press Freedom as a Barometer of Political Democracy', in H. D. Fischer and J. C. Merrill (eds.), *International and Intercultural Communication*, New York, Hastings House, 1970, pp. 136–42; D. H. Weaver, 'The Press and Government Restrictions: A Cross-National Study Over Time', *Gazette*, 23, 2, 1977, pp. 152–9.
20. K. Boyle, 'Opinion', *Article 19 Bulletin*, 5, April 1989, p. 10.
21. M. Scammell, 'Censorship and Its History — A Personal View', in *Article 19: Information, Freedom and Censorship*, Essex, Longman, 1988, pp. 1–18.
22. Ibid., p. 5.
23. 'Themes and Issues,' ibid., pp. 291–323. Article 19 is an international non-governmental human rights organization founded in London in 1986 to promote the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers, as enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
24. See, for example, W. A. Hachten, *Muffled Drums: The News Media in Africa*, Ames, Iowa State University Press, 1971; D. L. Wilcox, *Mass Media in Black Africa: Philosophy and Control*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1975; G. Mytton, *Mass Communication in Africa*, London, Edward Arnold, 1983; E. U. Onyedike, 'Government Press Relations in Nigeria: Effects of the Press Laws', *Gazette*, 34, 2, 1984, pp. 91–102; I. E. Nwosu, 'Mass Media Discipline and Control in Contemporary Nigeria: A Contextual Critical Analysis', *Gazette*, 39, 1, 1987, pp. 17–29; and J. J. Zaffiro, 'Regional Pressure and the Erosion of Media Freedom in an African Democracy: The Case of Botswana', *Journal of Communication* 38, 3, 1989, pp. 108–20.
25. Such 'watchdog' publications as *IPI Report*, *Index on Censorship* and *Article 19 Bulletin* carry regular reports on instances of these, not only in Africa but elsewhere in the world.
26. Article 19 of the Declaration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, and which reads: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'.
27. Article 9 of the Charter states: 'Every individual shall have the right to receive information. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.' See OAU, *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* adopted at the OAU Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, June 27, 1980. It came into force in 1986. The African Human Rights Commission was established to implement the Charter. See also P. A. V. Ansah, 'The African Charter and Its Relationship with Freedom of Expression,' *Media Development*, 35, 4, pp. 13–14.
28. Boyle, op. cit., p. 10.
29. M. Ennals, 'Article 19: A New Challenge to Censorship', *Media Development*, 33, 3, 1986, pp. 26–7.
30. P. A. V. Ansah, 'In Search of a Role for the African Media in a Democratic Process', *African Media Review*, 2, 2, 1988, pp. 1–16.
31. *1984 Population Census of Ghana: Preliminary Report*. Central Bureau of Statistics, Accra, Ghana, December 1984.
32. *Map of Ghanaian Languages*, compiled by the Language Centre at the University of Ghana and the Ghana Institute of Linguistics. Accra, Ghana, Asempa Publishers, 1980.
33. Statistics are drawn from various sources including government official statements and newspaper reports.
34. Government of Ghana, *Economic Recovery Programme, 1984–1986: A Review of Progress in 1984 and Goals for 1985, 1986*. A report prepared for the second meeting of the Consultative Group for Ghana in Paris, December 1984. Accra, Ghana, November 1984, p. iv.
35. Government of Ghana, *Economic Recovery Programme, 1984–1986*, Vol. 1. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corp., 1983, p. 15.

36. See, for example, African Development Bank, 'Ghana: Economic Prospects and Country Programming' (unpublished report), January 1988; 'In Western Eyes, Ghana is Regarded as African Model', in *The New York Times*, 3 January 1989, pp. 1 and 4.
37. Figures obtained from the Ghana Information Services Department, Accra.
38. For a detailed presentation of the newspaper and the rural communications projects of which it is a part, see, for example, S. T. K. Boafo, 'Wonsuom — A Rural Communication Project in Ghana', *Development Communication Report*, 47, 1984, p. 3; and I. Obeng-Quaidoo, 'Assessment of the Experience in the Production of Messages and Programmes for Rural Communication Systems: The Case of the Wonsuom Project in Ghana', *Gazette*, 42, 1, 1988, pp. 53–67.
39. S. T. K. Boafo, 'Democratizing Media Systems in African Societies: The Case of Ghana', *Gazette*, 41, 1, 1988, pp. 37–51.
40. For a more detailed analysis of government-media relations, press freedom and censorship in Ghana, see, for example, J. K. Smith, 'The Press and Elite Values in Ghana, 1962–70', *Journalism Quarterly*, 49, 4, 1972, pp. 670–83; S. T. K. Boafo, 'The Press, the Government and the People', *Legon Observer*, 9, 1974, pp. 150–6; W. A. Hachten, 'Ghana's Press Under the NRC: An Authoritarian Model for Africa', *Journalism Quarterly*, 53, 3, 1975, pp. 458–64; Y. Twumasi, 'Media of Mass Communication and the Third Republican Constitution in Ghana', *African Affairs*, 80, 1, 1981, pp. 13–27.
41. See S. T. K. Boafo, 'Ghana's Press Under the PNDC: Performance Under Confinement', *Gazette*, 35, 2, 1985, pp. 73–82; B. Ankomah, 'Ghana: Where Truth is on Holiday', *Index on Censorship*, 15, 4, 1986, pp. 33–4, 36; 'Ghana Gags the *Standard*', *IPI Report*, 35, 4, 1986, p. 7; and 'Ghana' in *Article 19, Information, Freedom and Censorship*, Essex, Longman, 1988, pp. 27–30.
42. Boafo, 'Ghana's Press Under the PNDC', op. cit.
43. See 'New Law on Newspapers Licensing Out', *People's Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1989, p. 1.
44. Article 19, op. cit., p. 30.
45. 'A Noose for the Watchdogs', *African Concord*, April 21–8, 1989, p. 25.
46. This section draws extensively on S. T. K. Boafo, 'Dealing with New Communication Technology: A Case Study of Video cassette Regulations in Ghana.' Report submitted to the Division of Communication Development and Free Flow of Information, UNESCO, Paris, March 1985.
47. BBC International Broadcasting and Audience Research, *World Radio and Television Receivers*, London, BBC, June 1987, p. 10.
48. The Copyright Act of 1961 was replaced in 1985 by the Copyright Law, 1985, P.N.D.C. Law 110, Section 53 of which specifically cites videotapes and videograms in cinematographic works eligible for copyright. The new law takes into account developments that have taken place in copyright law and practice since 1961, especially in sound recordings, cinematographic and derivative works as well as expressions of folklore.
49. 'Unauthorized Video Operations Banned', *Ghanaian Times*, 10 September 1983, pp. 1, 3.
50. In early 1989, ¢250 was equivalent to US$ 1.
51. See *People's Daily Graphic*, 20 April 1984, pp. 4–5.
52. See *Guide to Film Censorship*, published by the Information Services Department, Accra, n.d.
53. Censorship of video-cassette films dates from 1984. Available statistics indicate that an average of about 100 videotapes were initially submitted for censorship each month. By January 1985, more than 6,500 such films had been censored and passed by the Film Censorship Board. However, later that year, proprietors of video theatres and renting libraries had all but stopped submitting tapes for censorship.
54. *People's Daily Graphic*, 29 May 1984, p. 1. The Film Censorship Board was reconstituted again in September 1988.
55. 'Film as a Weapon', *People's Daily Graphic*, 29 May 1984, p. 2.
56. 'Ideals, Values Revisited', *People's Daily Graphic*, 1 November 1985, p. 2. See also 'Unregistered Video Owners' on page 1.
57. 'Accra Video Operators Contravene Directives', *People's Daily Graphic*, March 1988, p. 6. See also S. Sarpong, 'The Impact of Video', *People's Daily Graphic*,' 25 April 1988, p. 5; J. Duke, 'Ghana: Of "Rambos" and Videos', *West Africa*, 3713, 10–16 October 1988, p. 1883; 'Ghana: Between Video and Schooling', *African Concord*, 2 August 1988, p. 17.
58. According to the Cinematograph (Amendment) Decree of 1975, films rated 'X' and 'A' are suitable for showing only to adults, while those classified 'U' are suitable for general exhibition.
59. See, for instance, J. A. Lent, 'A Revolt Against a Revolution: The Fight Against Illegal Video', *Media Asia*, 11, 1, 1984, pp. 25–30. Lent quotes Haifaa Khalaffah observing in an *IPI Report* of February 1983 that in the Middle East VCRs had become a principal underground means of communicating a wide range of messages — from classical poetry to lectures on religion, politics and economics.
60. P. S. Guptara, 'Can Video Be Used to Liberate Instead of Enslave?' *Media Development*, 32, 1, 1985, pp. 22–3.
61. Ibid., p. 23.
62. E. Nelson, 'The Computer Invasion', *African Concord*, 31 May 1988, p. 5.

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New communication technologies and information freedom in Latin America

Rafael Roncagliolo

A framework

Information freedom

Information freedom refers to two legal and social conditions: the right to transmit and receive information without any public or private limitation, prohibition or censorship; and the existence of both the resources and channels needed to exercise this right by any one social actor in a society. Juridical analysis seeks to verify if the legal framework guarantees freedom of expression, while the sociological perspective investigates whether the practical conditions to exercise this freedom exist.

Thus understood, information freedom ever constitutes an expanding territory. Democratic policies on information and communication propose precisely to expand the field of action and the number of actors who use this freedom.[1] From an operational point of view, to use a statistical analogy, the degrees of information freedom are expressed by increases in both access to (reception of) and participation in (transmission of) the flow of messages. These degrees of freedom are measured, therefore, in terms of the number of receivers, the plurality of the messages and the diversity of sources.

The rapid development of new communication technologies can be seen in this context in terms of its effects on the above degrees of freedom. The problem confronted here can be formulated in the following questions: do the new communication technologies favour an increase in information freedom, incorporating new sources and social actors into the information flow; or, on the contrary, are they limiting these freedoms by concentrating resources and control in fewer hands?

We will attempt to answer these questions by referring to two recent Latin American experiences: popular video and the use of microcomputers for information interchange amongst non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Video and microcomputers are two advanced technologies in the field of information and communication. This presentation certainly does not cover the whole field of information and communication nor all the new technologies. It does, however, refer to experiences that should be taken into account when balancing the condition and perspectives of information freedom within the region.

New communication technologies

It is important to remember that mass communication, telecommunications and the information system form a single economic sector. This sector is the axis of the cultural industries (in the terms used by the Frankfurt School); it is the basis for the democratization of societies, the predominant educational agent (television was once considered a form of 'parallel school') and the most dynamic sector of modern economies.[2]

The basis for considering these three factors — mass communication, telecommunication and information — as a single sector is the fact that they are increasingly integrated and in particular the fact that they form a dynamic unit within which highly interactive advanced technologies develop. Thinking along these lines, Parker announced that we have moved from 'communications' to 'compunications'. Some French scholars state that the technological revolution in progress is not only 'informatic' but 'telematic'.

The academic trend presently recognized as the 'critical school' of communication research — Gonzales Manet, Hamelink, Mattelart, Mosco, Nordenstreng, Schiller and Schmuclar, to mention but a few authors — has for some time pointed out this integration, as well as explained its military and financial basis. It is a field that expands in an atmosphere of domination, but one in which alternative answers and challenges emerge, such as the ones we intend to explore here.

The information and communication sector constitutes the sociological, politico-cultural and macroeconomic framework within which are situated the experiences considered in this report.[3] In order to understand its effects on information freedom fully, it is important to consider six relevant characteristics of this sector:[4]

First: The sector's share of the Gross National Product grows at a much faster rate than any other sector of the economy.

Second: Its productivity also grows at a greater speed than all the rest.

Third: A rising proportion of the Active Economic Population is incorporated in this sector. Any statistically-classified occupational chart will demonstrate that in this sector the growth of workers per annum is greater than in any other.

Parker also demonstrated this in his study of the United States.

Fourth: Costs and prices rise at a slower rate in this sector than in others. In actual fact, however, they fall. This is shown by the everyday consumption of end-products, be they video-recorders, parabolic antennas or personal micro-computers — just to take the example of the three main components of the sector (social communication, telecommunication and information systems). It is sufficient as an illustration of the fact that the price of computer power is estimated to fall by half each year.

Fifth: Equipment is miniaturized and decreases in size and weight while increasing in capacity. Good examples of this are the 'Video-8' camera, the lap-top micro-computer and the latest parabolic antennas.

Sixth: There is an increase in the degree of 'technological transparency'. The ability to handle equipment without the need for previous instruction or training by specialists grows as the available equipment evolves.

These six characteristics produce a paradoxical rule: according as information and communication instruments decrease in price, size, weight and handling difficulty, they increase in sophistication and power. This process could also include an increase in durability, but this is not in fact the case because there is an unprecedentedly high level of planned obsolescence. The manufacturers are concerned to ensure profitable, continuous and periodic equipment renewal.

This is the only economic sector that meets all of these six characteristics simultaneously. The speed with which it is expanding throughout the world is not only surprising but unprecedented. This explains the emergence of powerful grass-roots movements that have appropriated and domesticated these innovations for development, organization, education and the defence of cultural identities.

With this concept and context, it is appropriate to analyze the two specific phenomena considered in this report: popular video movements and the use by NGOs of micro-computers for information exchange and information-flow development. In both cases, we will start by identifying the social actors and then present the pertinent exchanges and emerging networks.

Expansion of popular video as a medium for information exchange

The social actors

In spite of its relative novelty, the video-cassette recorder (VCR) has spread rapidly in Latin America, giving rise to a whole range of commercial networks, most of them illegal. This illicit activity is neither registered nor does it recognize any copyright or intellectual property laws. For the researcher, it is therefore a world of problematic definitions and access. However, some earlier studies are, in fact, worth reviewing:

1. In *Video World Wide*, IPAL presented a first estimate of the impact of video in Latin America.[5] The following cases were examined: Brazil (Luiz Fernando Santoro), Chile (Jessica Ullola and Eliana Jara Donoso), Colombia (Claudia Bayona) and Peru (Andres Costa, Henry Geddes and Rafael Roncagliolo). Independent and popular video was already mentioned in those preliminary studies. These references are to be found in the chapters on Brazil, Chile and Peru. There are no references to Columbia, Panama or Venezuela despite the fact that they are the countries in the region that have the highest number of VCRs per capita. This is a sign that the phenomenon arises as a result of more profound social processes than a mere change in the pattern of electro-domestic consumption.

2. In 1989, a complete and wide-ranging report appeared whose conclusions were fundamental to a global perception of the world communication situation and, within that framework, the expansion of video in Latin America. This was the *World Communication Report*, which for the first time gave statistics that allowed comparison to be made between different countries and different years.[6] We have been able to include some reference to this work, although the material it contains deserves a far more detailed analysis than is possible here.

3. The year 1989 also saw the appearance of the *Directory of Film and Video Production Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean*.[7] It was announced as 'an indexed guide listing individuals and organizations that provide film and video production related services in each country of Latin America and the Caribbean', but in truth it constitutes the most extensive and systematic effort to date to locate and classify producers, distributors, exhibitors, festivals, publications and all other related independent activities in the world of video and the cinema.

4. In 1987 IPAL, with the support of the Centro Internazionale CROCEVIA in Italy, launched an initiative to create an independent grass-roots Latin American video network called V*ideored*. To date, five newsletters have been published. These systematically accumulate information on grass-roots video groups, videos available in IPAL's video library, information on exchange, services, technological advances and other related subjects. In collaboration with the 'Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television' (ICRT), and the 'Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano — Cine, Television y Video', which is held in Havana every December, *Videored* expanded rapidly in its first few months of existence. By 30 June 1989, it had registered 165 Latin American members and a further 6 from outside the region, including Burkina Faso and Mozambique. It had a video library of 211 programmes made by independent producers from 16 different countries, 13 in Latin America, Trinidad and Tobago (1 video), Canada (1 video) and the United States (8 videos).

Using the information from these studies, we have made a table grouping information on the situation in the 16 Latin American countries (including Puerto Rico, which is classified as a part of Latin America despite its peculiar legal status) participating in *Videored* (Table 1).

The figures below shed light on the regional situation in Latin America and help to rectify some erroneous perceptions.

TABLE 1

Country	*TV receivers per 1000 inhabitants (1986)* (1)	*VCRs as % of TV households* (2)	*Annual VCR % increase 1987–88* (3)	*Ranucci directory* (4)	*Groups* (5)	*Cassettes* (6)
Argentina	214	7.3	37.70	54	8	4
Bolivia	76	N.A.	N.A.	16	10	19
Brazil	188	15.0	28.20	61	5	23
Chile	164	5.0	21.95	27	8	34
Colombia	102	39.2	17.36	31	6	10
Costa Rica	210	9.5	31.94	14.	5	6
Cuba	202	N.A.	N.A.	9	31	19
Ecuador	73	17.1	17.93	18	6	17
Mexico	136	19.4	31.94	44	3	5
Nicaragua	59	N.A.	N.A.	12	7	12
Panama	161	43.0	10.53	8	2	0
Paraguay	161	N.A.	N.A.	2	1	0
Peru	84	37.8	12.83	45	64	39
Puerto Rico	247	N.A.	N.A.	14	1	0
Uruguay	141	38.8	7.77	40	1	11
Venezuela	141	38.8	7.77	40	1	11
Total or average	149	21.7	19.39	410	165	201

Sources: Columns 1, 2 and 3: *World Communication Report,* UNESCO, Paris, 1989, pp. 159 and 427. Column 4: Ranucci, K. *Directory of Film and Video Production Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean,* Foundation for Independent Video and Film Inc., New York, 1989.

First conclusion: Although the international average number of televisions per 1000 inhabitants (bottom of column 1) is not a weighted average, it still confirms that television reaches the majority of the population of Latin America. In effect, there is almost one television per family. The image of radio as the means of mass communication, with television restricted to the élites, is already outdated. TV coverage in Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba and Puerto Rico is almost total. In Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru, although television reaches a significant proportion of the population, the rural areas are excluded, at least until transmission via satellite and reception using parabolic antennas can be generalized. Grass-roots movements therefore unfold in a cultural atmosphere in which people are accustomed to living with audio-visual messages, and do not constitute a strange phenomenon.

Second conclusion: VCRs have a large market, although they are inaccessible to the majority. Among the countries considered, only in Colombia, Panama, Peru and Venezuela does the number of VCRs exceed one third of the number of home TV receivers. In others, like Chile, the statistical information available probably understates the number of VCRs due to problems with sources. The estimates for Colombia, Panama, Peru and Venezuela are well above those for Belgium (26.3 per cent) or Italy (16.9 per cent) and are of the same order as those for Denmark (38.3 per cent), Finland (38.5 per cent) and France (38 per cent).[8]

Third conclusion: The annual average rate of increase, at 19.39 per cent (bottom of column 3), is remarkable considering the years of economic crisis. Unfortunately, we do not have complete world statistics with which to confirm global tendencies, but we can point out that among the developed countries cited in the *World Communication Report,* only Italy (39.66 per cent) had a faster average rate of growth than Argentina, Brazil and Costa Rica. This confirms that the grass-roots movements are developing in a region that is not only accustomed to audio-visual images but in which the VCR is rapidly becoming a familiar appliance.

Fourth conclusion: Both Karen Ranucci's 410 entries and *Videored*'s 165 groups prove the existence of a continuous and growing effort to domesticate video, introducing new social actors and messages into the exchange of information, and thus increasing information freedom.

A tentative classification

There are many non-governmental entities, research and social development centres, unions, rural groups, women's associations and other types of groups that are beginning to use video for recreation, local development, education and organization. In an earlier work, we have shown that the Latin American Popular Video Movement offers no less than five different types of products, often in combined form.[9] They are: the video register; group video; special events video; anti-news video; and video transmitted by Hertzian waves or cable. We will consider them in order.

The video register

The majority of the groups using this register come from grass-roots experiences with print, radio or other media. They quickly discover video's technical and economic advantages and use it to record daily life and history. In Villa El Salvador, Peru, for example, all the early organizational history has been gathered by magnetoscope.[10] Another Peruvian organization, the 'Centro de Divulgacion de Historia

Popular' (CEDHIP) has, through its participation in strikes and mobilizations, recorded the history of the Labour Movement over the last 50 years.

Group video

Every day more efforts are made to use video for training and development. The 'Consejo de Educacion de Adultos de America Latina' (CEAAL), together with IPAL, organized a Latin American seminar on 'Video for grass-roots education' in Montevideo in March 1988.[11] One group, LU-PAN-GUA, from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, has a catalogue of 166 productions.[12] Most of the development projects initiated in Latin America devote an important part of their education dimension to group and closed-circuit TV. They fully exploit the feed-back capability of this instrument.

Special events video

The groups that have most developed this technique are those that have incorporated video production into popular festivities. The Brazilian group, TV VIVA, has developed a highly aesthetic, humorous and dramatic technique. It is based on recorded testimonies and popular experiences of the various themes of everyday life — from public corruption to the use of condoms. The results are exhibited in public plazas for collective discussion. It is important to note that both TV VIVA and LU-PAN-GUA programmes are also used by regular TV channels. This is a sign that these productions are starting to exert an influence on the mass communication media proper.

Anti-news video

Another strong Latin American video movement is the production of 'anti-news'. The aim is to present daily news topics from a grass-roots perspective, antagonistic to, and contesting, the 'official versions'. Under the peculiar political conditions in Chile, Teleanalisis's work is a paradigm of this approach. With the help of unions and other social organizations, it has been able to create a truly alternative news network. Through this, video cassettes are periodically distributed presenting a different reading of national and international events. Here again, several TV channels from different countries transmit Teleanalisis programmes.

Video for mass transmission

There is a clear tendency in Latin America towards a blurring of the line between video and television. This is achieved through gaining time in the mass media for grass-roots expression. The demand for productions from LU-PAN-GUA, TV VIVA and Teleanalisis has already been noted. There are numerous other groups producing specifically for mass transmission. In Cochabamba (Bolivia), Tarpuy broadcasts rural development programmes for one hour daily in Quechua. With the same end in view, IPAL in Peru is sponsoring a weekly hour-long transmission on Channel 7 of the national broadcasting channel (the 'Surcos' programme). San Paulo's unions have gone one step beyond this by creating their own station, 'TV do trabajadores'. All of this demonstrates that the flow of information is broadening and pluralizing.

Networks for information exchange

Video groups have developed their work in the framework of horizontal, south-south cooperation, advocating regional collective self-reliance. In this atmosphere, each social actor becomes a part of the Latin American popular video movement. The movement expresses itself through publications, meetings, training and services exchange — all of which help to develop a vast regional network.

Publications

In the IPAL documentation centre (COMRED), which is far from holding a complete collection, there are 46 books and/or articles on Latin American video. There are no less than 7 periodical publications dedicated to this theme received and registered in the centre. This does not include those publications which give preferential treatment to the subject but which are not exclusively dedicated to video.[13] Here are some particulars about these periodicals and their activities up to November 1989:

(a) *Interaccion*. Bogota, Centro de Comunicacion Educativa Audiovisual. Founded in May 1987 and produced every four months, with seven issues of eight pages.
(b) *Ouvirolhando*. Rio de Janeiro, official publication of the Associacao Brasileira do Audiovisual no Movimento Popular. Founded in December 1985 and produced quarterly, with three issues of four pages.
(c) *SERTAL*. Bogota, Bolletin Informativo del Servicio Radioteleviso de la Iglesia en America Latina. Founded in December 1984 and produced quarterly with 19 issues of ten pages.
(d) *Video Latinoamericano*. Havana, Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television. Founded in July 1987, with eight issues of eight pages. This periodical has a vast regional circulation.
(e) *Videocontacto*. Quito, Centro de Educacion Popular (CEDEP) and Centro de Estudios y Difusion Social (CEDIS). Founded in 1988, with two issues of six pages.
(f) *Videopopular*. Sao Paulo, Boletim da Associacao Brasilera de Video Popular. Founded in August 1984, with ten issues of six pages.
(g) *Videored*. Lima, IPAL. Founded in March 1986 and published quarterly with seven issues of six pages.

Meetings

Since the first Latin American video meeting at the 1987 'Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine' in Havana, there have been several regional and subregional meetings, the most important of which have been:

(a) IX Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, Cine, Television y Video, Havana, December 1987.
(b) MONTE-VIDEO 88, El Video en la Educacion Popular, Montevideo, March 1988.

(c) Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Video Alternativo, Santiago de Chile, April 1988.
(d) Seminario Internacional sobre Video, Comunicacion Popular y Intercambio Technologico, San Jose de Costa Rica, August-September 1988.
(e) Encuentro sobre Experiencias de Video en America Latina, Quito, October 1988.
(f) X Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, Cine, Television y Video, Havana, December 1988.
(g) Encuentro Latinoamericano de Video COCHAMBAMBA, Cochambamba, June 1989.

These meetings are evidence of the enthusiasm, and the prospects for regional cooperation, animating promoters and producers of video. At the majority of these meetings, conclusions and final documents have been approved and this demonstrates the advances made in the process of collective maturity.

In 1989, it was decided to systematize the meetings, reducing them to two yearly events: one in December during the Havana Festival and the other on a rotating basis. This started with COCHAMBAMBA 89 and the next was planned for Montevideo in 1990. An established network has been set up, which is plural and multiform and makes progressively better use of resources and interactions.

Training and services

In addition to publications and meetings, which are privileged means of exchange, a vast number of different forms of cooperation are evident. Regional and sub-regional courses are organized, services are exchanged and, in general, one can say that a new flow of information is sprouting, taking root and spreading. Through this flow, the products of each group and country are disseminated by other groups in the same and other countries.

Already a Costa Rican specialist, originally invited by Peruvian video-makers, has gone on to work with Chilean and Argentinian groups. The experience of those who initiated a video computer with special equipment (a Commodore Amiga) was immediately shared and it services other groups both inside and outside the country. The Bolivian and Peruvian groups working with aboriginal languages (Quecha and Aymara) have organized themselves for mutual support.

In August 1989, IPAL organized the first Latin American training workshop. One teacher was a scriptwriter and the other a producer, both from the Brazilian TV Globo. The Cuban 'Escuela Internacional de San Antonio de los Banos' continues systematically to recruit students and professors throughout the region.

Networks

As we noted at MONTE-VIDEO 88, the battle for greater freedom and plurality in the flow of audio-visual communication 'must unfold within three complementary elements: grass-roots video development; viewer education; and conquest of 'aerial space' or 'open channel transmission'.[14] Advances in all three fields can now be confirmed and, in particular, ties between grass-roots videos and mass communication have been established.

Without doubt, the Havana Festival and the Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television have acted as a stimulus for these regional networks. Other organizations, such as the Consejo de Educacion de Adultos de America Latina (CEAAL) and IPAL, have added to this. Within this atmosphere of inter-institutional cooperation, there are also specific networks like the pastoral network and the Quecha and Aymara associations mentioned above, and national networks like the 'Associacao Brasiliera do Video no Movimento Popular' and the Bolivian and Peruvian associations, the latter formed following the Encuentro Nacional de Huampani in March 1989.

Finally should be mentioned the special efforts in this field of the Union Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Radiofusion (ULCRA). This body groups together all public service (i.e. non-commercial) broadcasters and has created an ad hoc commission that is studying the means by which independent and grass-roots productions can have access to TV channels. The creation of this commission, initiated by Argentinian, Cuban, Mexican and Peruvian channels, together with WACC-AL, UNDA-AL and IPAL, is a symptom that exchanges amongst grass-roots video groups can serve to pluralize significantly the flow, sources and messages of Latin American mass communication. All of this means greater and more effective information freedom.

The use of micro-computers for information exchange among non-governmental organizations

The social actors

We have less empirical evidence with regard to the use of micro-computers to increase information exchange and freedom than we do in the case of video. We have therefore concentrated our empirical and exploratory efforts on Lima in order to find out who in this city are the actors in this field, and then to present the existing network in Latin America. The lack of systematic information prevents us from attempting the kind of classification we were able to make for video.

We think it is particularly valid to choose Lima for a case-study because it is a city featuring the presence of a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Peru has a concentration of organizations for international technical cooperation channelled through NGOs. It is sufficient to note that the National Planning Institute there has estimated that the total sum received by Peruvian NGOs in 1987 was US $ 25 million.

For the purposes of this report, IPAL researcher Patricia Yep sent out a questionnaire to the 213 NGOs in Lima affiliated to the 'Asociación Nacional de Centros'. The recipients of the questionnaire constitute a precise universe and provide by themselves a valid operational definition. The 'Asociación Nacional de Centros' was established exclusively for non-profit-making organizations whose statutes declare them to be devoted to the investigation, promotion and realization of development projects.

Due to changes of address, 14 questionnaires were returned unopened. Of the remaining 199 organizations, 32 replied. This reply-rate (16 per cent) expresses, perhaps, the fact that the vast majority of these NGOs are small institutes (i.e. with less than 5 staff members) who have not even considered the need for informatization and who, consequently, have no interest in answering a questionnaire whose subject matter seems remote and inapplicable. Of the 32 replies received, 7 were from institutions having no computers, although they intend to obtain these in the near future. That left 25 responses from NGOs to be analyzed. The main conclusions are as follows:

First: One NGO failed to indicate the date on which equipment was acquired. The data for the remaining 24 given in Table 2 are:

TABLE 2

Year acquired	*Number of NGOs*
Before 1976	0
1977–79	1
1980–82	0
1983–85	5
1986–88	16
1989	2
Total	24

Second: It is important to note that the NGOs follow general market trends when purchasing. All have bought, or received as donations, IBM or compatible equipment. Some also have Apple or Commodore apparatuses but, with one exception, these are in addition to PCs.

Third: The 25 institutions here considered own, as a group, 106 computers. IBMs or compatibles account for 96 of these. There is an average of 4.2 computers per institution, but this figure is unbalanced since one institution alone owns 29 computers. For the remaining 24 institutions, the average is 3.2 computers, which is quite high.

Fourth: Note that only one institution has a PS/2, 8 have ATs and 14 have XTs. The predominant CPU is thus the 8086 model. This could mean a relative set-back in relation to newer equipment. This fact is related to the Peruvian market situation at the time these machines were acquired. The arithmetic mean, median and mode apply to 1987, scarcely 2 years before the survey.

Fifth: NGOs' acquisitions are, in general, along the lines of market expansion. We have seen this with hardware and it also applies to software: word processors (Wordstar and Word Perfect); spread sheets (Lotus 1-2-3 and Quattro); data base programmes (dBase and UNESCO'S Micro ISIS), and desk-top publishing (Ventura) — in that order.

Nevertheless, the early acquisition of modems indicates that information and telecommunication exchange has been present almost from the start of the informatization process. Even though the equipment is not the most recent, powerful and fastest available, a relevant development is that 7 of the 25 NGOs (28 per cent) have also acquired a modem and belong to, or intend to join, specific networks: Interdoc and Geonet. Information exchange is becoming a function every bit as important as publishing documents and administering projects.

The questionnaire included a question concerning the purpose for which complementary equipment was acquired. Modems occupied first place in priority, followed by: more powerful microcomputers; additional terminals; printers; mice; scanners; monitors; and various expansion cards.

One can conclude from this small survey that the flow of information exchange through the use of computers will become, in a very short time, a common and habitual practice. It feeds mainly on the Interdoc network, to which we will return presently.

Exchanges and networks

Despite the low level of utilization recorded by Lima NGOs, and the similar situation we may hypothesize as existing elsewhere in Latin America, it is remarkable to record the rapid progression of telecommunication innovations. In less than five years, the more dynamic NGOs have travelled from mail services, to the telephone, to the telex, to the fax and finally to electronic mail.

The world-wide project Interdoc has played an outstanding role in this modernization process. The project originated following the 'International Conference on Documentation for Change' held in Lisbon in January 1982. Forty-six delegates from documentation centres throughout the world participated. The role of world-wide co-ordination in the project was undertaken by IDOC in Rome, while a further meeting was convened by this institution in Velletri in Italy in October 1984. The final resolution of that meeting called for the formation of 'a network of documentation centres and active groups of non-governmental organizations' which would provide channels to share information-handling experience and establish a collective data-bank. The network would be known as 'Interdoc'.[15]

Latin America, represented in Interdoc by the Peruvian DESCO, immediately took up the challenge and, with the help of the Chilean ILET, began publishing the bulletin *Contact-0* at the end of 1985. Up to late 1989, 18 issues had appeared. The Latin American NGOs in Interdoc organized no less than ten meetings and workshops in the four years up to 1989 and were already exchanging information via modems. Among the NGOs participating in this network are: CEDES and CLACSO from Argentina; INEDER and UNITAS from Bolivia; IBASE from Brazil; ILET from Chile and Mexico; CINEP from Colombia; CEDEP and CEDIS from Ecuador; CRIES from Nicaragua; CEASPA from Panama; CAAAP, CERA Las Casas, CIPCA, DESCO, and IPAL from Peru; ICD and IOCU from Uruguay. Subregional networks have also emerged: the Peruvian centres have established Interdoc Andino, thanks to their strategic location in different geographical zones and social strata. CIPCA is in the north; CAAAP in the Amazon; CERA Las Casas in the southern Andes; and DESCO and IPAL in Lima.

This process directly benefits from the development of world networks oriented towards development problems and within which NGO participation is privileged. Examples are: Carinet, Geonet, Greennet and Peacenet. In addition to this there is a Latin American electronic mail service initiated by IBASE in Brazil.

All of this adds up to new actors, messages and alternatives in the trans-border flow of information and data, which should broaden information freedom and the efficiency of NGOs, although it is still too early to formulate a balance sheet and firm conclusions.

Notes

1. See R. Roncagliolo and S. Macassi, 'Estado y democratización de los medios: notas para una política nacional de comunicaciones', *Socialismo y participación* (CEDEP, Lima), no. 45, March 1969.
2. See R. Roncagliolo, 'América Latina: las comunicaciones en el año 2000', in M. Gutiérrez (ed.), *Video, tecnología y comunicación popular*, pp. 35–49, CROCEVIA-IPAL, Lima, 1989.
3. See R. Roncagliolo, 'Información y comunicación: el desafío tecnológico', *Videored*, IPAL, año 2, nos. 6–7, July–December 1989, pp. 28–30.
4. The first four of these were developed in *Informe No. 2* de la División Conjunta de Industria y Tecnología, CEPAL-ONUDI, Santiago de Chile, 1986. The remaining two come from the shared experiences of all those related to this sector, and in particular from NGOs and grass-roots groups.
5. Alvarado, M. (ed.). *Video World Wide*, UNESOO, Kent, 1988.
6. *World Communication Report*, UNESCO, Paris, 1989.
7. Ranucci, K. *Directory of Film and Video Production Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Foundation for Independent Video and Film Inc., New York, 1989.
8. See *World Communication Report*.
9. See R. Roncagliolo, 'Las nuevas tecnologías pueden contrarrestar la homogenización', *Corto Circuito*, Unión Latina, Paris, no. 7, April 1988, pp. 5–6.
10. See G. Gogin, 'Centro de comunicación popular de Villa El Salvador', in A. R. Tealdo (ed.), *Radio y democracía en América Latina*, IPAL, Lima, 1989, pp. 203–28.
11. The findings and proceedings appear in condensed form in P. Valdeavellano (ed.), *El video en la educación popular*, CEAAL-IPAL, Lima, 1989.
12. See LPG, *Video católico*, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 1989.
13. Examples of this category are: OCIC-AL, UCLAP, UNDA-AL's *Arandu*, CIESPAL's *Chasqui* or CIMCA's Bolivian *Red de Recursos de Comunicación Alternativa*.
14. Roncagliolo, R. 'Distribución e intercambio: hacia la conquista del espacio audivisual latinoamericano', in P. Valdeavellano (ed.), op. cit., p. 65.
15. See *Contact-0*, no. 1, ILET, Santiago de Chile, December 1985.

New communication technologies and press freedom: a Chilean case study

Fernando Reyes Matta

Introduction

The incorporation of so-called new technologies by Latin American countries during the 1980s has coincided with a process of recovery of democracy and representative institutions in most of these countries. In 1977, only Colombia and Venezuela had democratic institutions and political parties. By 1987 the situation had changed: only Chile and Paraguay were governed by military regimes. The news media, and the professionals working in them, had to convert from working in authoritarian political structures to a model of political pluralism and a multiplicity of social organizations, i.e. move from a situation in which investigating and asking questions were dangerous and could lead to prison or other forms of punishment, to one in which they were required to give an account of social diversity and meet the needs of a democratic culture aspiring to disseminate its demands and proposals via the different media.

The technological transformation in the region was marked by three phenomena that emphasized the accessibility of the news:

1. Satellites and parabolic antennas have originated new consumer areas, sometimes legal, sometimes illegal. TV reception is now possible across national boundaries and the contents often originate either in northern countries like Spain and the United States or in other countries of the subcontinent such as Chile and Brazil.
2. Video recorders and video production have provided a new audiovisual space in which democratic alternatives could find expression, as in Chile and Uruguay.
3. Microcomputers and the creation of networks and data banks have greatly increased news interaction, in spite of obstacles and repression. They have also made possible the creation of alternative information nuclei to the centralized and powerful data systems.

These three technological factors have created new conditions for communication. The traditional industrial media have been most powerfully affected, in particular the printed media. Here a tension has been building up between the potentials of this new technology and the inertia of a system that structured its basic patterns of news collection and distribution on those of the last century and the beginning of this one respectively.

The disruption and contradictions generated by the new technologies in traditional communication patterns are further enhanced by the increasing tension between the legal frameworks within which the mass media operated, which in most cases date from the Second World War, and the possibilities of the new situation. An obvious example is the possibility of television transmissions across international borders and their reception by parabolic antennas, either for retransmission by a local station or for direct home consumption. There are some extraordinary cases of this in, for example, Bolivia and Colombia.

The impact of the microcomputer and the creation of networks linking personal computers via the modem and the telephone has led to the development of a new level of information exchange in the northern countries, and we can observe active progress in this direction in several Latin American countries, for example Brazil, Mexico and Chile. The new level of exchange is marked by autonomous information flows, both along the North-South axis and between the countries of the region. This technology gives rise to 'communities of interest' formed in the pursuit of specific subjects, which structure their own electronic conferences and gather information for network members. Important examples of this sort of development are the Peacenet and Geonet systems, which are respectively concerned with the situation in Central America and the ecological problems of the Amazon and Antarctic regions.

Within the framework created by these two changes — the shift from authoritarian rule to democracy and the information expansion generated by the new technologies — it is necessary to analyze the challenge presented to the practice of journalism. The computerization of the editorial room poses new challenges for text production and editing and for the relationship between journalists and external sources, especially when these are data-banks, whether originated by the media themselves or by other national and international organizations.

In the Southern Cone countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay there is now a double challenge to journalism. It must both efficiently incorporate new technologies into its daily activities and transform itself at a pace that is compatible with efforts to restructure democracy.

Chile: a case study

This paper concentrates on the example of Chile, but some comparative references will be made to Mexico and Uruguay. Chile has lived through a fundamental contradiction in the past 15 years. On the one hand, freedom of speech has been severely and, in some cases, critically limited. On the other, and in the name of modernization, highly advanced techniques have become available, especially in the areas of telephones, telex, data transmission and fax networks.

The crisis of freedom of speech began before 11 September 1973. Political polarization began during the presidential campaign of 1970 and increased during the term of office of the Popular Unity Government. Journalists and the mass media as a whole ended up taking sides. Professionalism and freedom to analyze suffered so severely that even in 1989, Chilean journalism had not yet recovered. Following the military coup in 1973, a series of measures were adopted to 'demolish the political press'. Newspapers, magazines and editorial houses linked to political parties and owned either by left-wing individuals or by the Popular Unity Government itself were closed down. In some cases their equipment and offices were seized. At the same time the right-wing paper *La Tribuna* and the Christian Democratic *La Prensa* were forced to close down through economic and political pressure. The same phenomenon was experienced by the political magazines. A number of journalists were incarcerated and some killed on the day of the coup or during the following week. Chile began to live a process in which an important part of society was deprived of representative means of communication.

By 1976 the need to create a 'non-official' medium was highlighted by the closure of *Radio Balmaceda*, a station linked to the Christian Democrats which had become the focus of confrontation with the military government. Against this background the magazine *Solidaridad* emerged, protected by the Archbishop of Santiago. It was followed by *APSI*, a bulletin specializing in foreign affairs, which expanded over the years into a weekly general information magazine. In 1977, as a result of a conflict between some press owners and a group of predominantly Christian Democratic journalists, the magazine *Hoy* was created. This remained the principal forum for national public opinion up to the mid-1980s.

Between 1977 and 1980, the official objective of the military government was to give the country a form of legality. The 1980 Constitution legalized the press system; some other non-official magazines emerged as part of the ambiguous framework it installed, e.g. *La Bicicleta*, *Analisis*, and *Hacienda Camino*. These were dedicated respectively to youth and cultural recovery, a wide and pluralistic political debate, and peasant organization. The 1980 Constitution included the following guarantee:

> Each and every natural or legal person has the right to establish, edit and maintain newspapers, magazines and journals under the conditions indicated by the law.

However, this right was modified by Transitional Article 24 which stated that any new publication must obtain prior authorization from the Ministry of the Interior.

Following popular protests and mobilization in 1983, political life became more open and there was space for different radio news stations. The top radio station, *Radio Cooperativa Vitalicia*, oriented its programming towards key components: broadcasting music with 'democratic connotations' from Latin America, as well as Cuba, Italy and Spain; and a permanent news service, particularly about the opposition. Despite its lack of transmission equipment, it was able to establish a network of associated stations throughout the country. The mechanism for this was the state-owned National Telecommunications Company which honoured its contract to relay the news since it was forced by the Government to operate under very strict constraints which imposed self-financing. This case was a vivid example of the contradiction between the Government's restrictive social and political policies and its application of an extreme free-market economic model. As we shall see below, this also permitted the creation of alternative video networks and the distribution of independent newscasts to autonomous video-audience networks.

In the new conditions, the first magazine to use a computerized editorial office was the reborn *Cauce*. A similar situation made possible the publication of *Pluma y Pincel*, which became a leading cultural journal in 1986 and 1987. The 'official' media also introduced new technology. In 1981 the existence of a fixed exchange rate enabled the *El Mercurio* group to implement a complete modernization plan which involved moving the bulk of operations to the area of Lo Castillo, near the Cordillera mountains. Almost the entire process was computerized and a data bank established using material going back to the first issue of the paper in 1900 and including all newspapers and magazines from the 1980s. The project was completed in 1988, at which point it provided the most modern information system of any newspaper in Chile and one of the most advanced in Latin America.

The economic crisis altered the finances of the great national papers. In 1981 the *El Mercurio* group held 70% of total investment in newspapers, valued at US$513 million. By 1981, however, that investment had fallen to US$359 million. Four years later, the total corporate debt of the group totalled US$128. As a contrast, at the same time the total for the public debt of all publishing companies in Spain was no more than US$30 million. In January 1985, after the owner Augustin Edwards pledged all his personal belongings as guarantees, an agreement was reached to stagger settlement of the group's debts over a ten-year period.

The main creditor of the group, as well as that of the other main newspaper chain, the *La Tercera* group, is the *Banco del Estado* — the state-owned bank. Accordingly, despite technical modernization, economic dependence has meant that censorship and political restrictions continue to be severe. Until the 1988 plebiscite, news coverage in these media was decidedly in favour of the regime of General Pinochet.

The regime also tried to tighten its control over the opposition press when it decreed Law No. 18015 in 1985. This provided for fines and imprisonment as penalties for ignoring restrictions on attempts to 'establish, edit, and circulate new publications.' The independent media were forced to engage in long legal battles in order to continue publishing. One way round this was shown by the 1987 transformation of *Fortin Mapocho* from an information journal aimed at traders in the Vega Central produce market to a centre-left newspaper, following its purchase by former senator Jorge Lavendero.

The same year saw the emergence, after a long series of requests for authorization, of the newspaper *La Epoca*. Linked to the Christian Democrats and committed to modernization and independent professional journalism, this was the first non-official newspaper to be planned around new large-scale journalistic technology. It has a fully-computerized system with thirty terminals and a central memory bank, giving immediate access to the material published by the paper over the preceding six months.

These developments, however, culminated in a series of lawsuits and penalties imposed on directors and journalists of different media. On 31 December 1988 the Government withdrew accusations against nearly 40 individuals in 28 cases in the civil and military courts. Despite this, the Journalists' Association charged that the Government had only dropped a small number of the total attacks on journalists. An official spokesperson replied that the Government could not withdraw the cases that were under active consideration at the time, 'because there are other state bodies involved in the corresponding legal actions.' A week later the President of the Journalists' Association revealed that there were 18 journalists involved in 27 cases still before the military courts.

In May 1989 there were more than 30 laws in Chile restricting the freedom of the press, a figure that can only be compared with the situation in South Africa. Constant government persecution of journalists came to a head in 1988 when the Journalists' Association called three national strikes. These symbolic stoppages, lasting five minutes in the first case and one hour in the others, had a strong impact because they were supported by journalists from both the official and opposition media and took place during press conferences and similar events.

New technologies and press censorship

The introduction of new technologies in Chile has become a reality, despite difficult economic conditions. Expenditure on computers, software accessory equipment and, more recently, faxes and cellular telephones, increased from 20 per cent of total investment of the national media in 1983 to 52 per cent in 1988. Despite the big economic differences between newspapers such as *Las Ultimas Noticias* of the *El Mercurio* chain and *Fortin Mapocho*, the latter has been able to compete using the minimal technical resources of eight microcomputers and a telex. It owes its influence to efficient and rapid news coverage.

The modernization of journalistic practices under the repressive conditions described above has, however, had a sequel in a new manifestation of the 'polarization virus'. During the 1980s some media, particularly those of the opposition, developed a tendency to divide things into black and white, good and evil, authoritarian and democratic, government and opposition. A new generation of journalists is needed today for whom these simple polarities are no longer adequate and who wish to give a more nuanced account of social and political life. According to editors and directors from across the political spectrum, recent graduates in journalism lack the drive and initiative to undertake proper professional reporting, despite their technical sophistication. Accounts mention that new entrants are 'efficient in theory but mediocre in practice', that 'people are impregnated with a feeling of fear in ... carrying out their professional work', and that 'the generation of the 1980s has been educated with many more deficiencies than ours'.

A similar picture emerges elsewhere. In Argentina, for example, the same dichotomy of technological modernity and low professional level was reported by the well-known journalist Jorge Bernetti. According to him, on his return following democratization, the level of information of the new-generation journalists was exceedingly low. One of the conclusions of a seminar held in Buenos Aires in 1986 to discuss the crisis in journalism was that the introduction of new technology into editorial offices, particularly the increased use of microcomputers, had substantially reduced the stability of the editorial staff. In the 1970s, the normal staff needed to produce a publication was around the 40 mark. Today, the staff consists of four or five individuals responsible for organizing and producing the magazine while free-lance collaborators produce the material for publication.

According to Oscar Gonzalez, general editor of the magazine *El Periodista*, the traditional media were the first to introduce new technology in order to maintain their competitive position. It is important to point out that the newspapers which led the move to incorporate new technology were precisely those linked to the Military Government, and that there is therefore no correlation between modernization and democracy. A similar dichotomy between the authoritarian regime and the incorporation of new technologies was observed by Richard Caballero in Paraguay.

In Uruguay, on the other hand, the transition from military government to democracy led to a crisis for those small magazines that had been important in the struggle for democracy. The traditional media had the resources — better professional staff, well-established distribution networks, new printing technology, advertising monopolies, etc. — to enable them to prosper in the new conditions.

The availability of new technologically-dependent resources, for example electronic data-bases, does not necessarily mean that they are actually used. A study in Mexico examined students of journalism, professors and researchers in communication, and journalists. In the case of the students and academics the study found that, although their institutions had access to 10 international data-bases, more than 30 per cent of the individuals surveyed were unaware of their existence. In the case of the five principal newspapers surveyed, only the government daily *El Nacional* had access to international data-bases, and none of the papers had its own fully-operational news data-base. The general findings of the survey were that:

(i) state-controlled data-bases, other than those run by universities, were the least consulted since they were designed with the specific needs of a government institution in mind;
(ii) outside the natural sciences, students consult data-bases for bibliographic searches only;
(iii) apart from a small group which finds them very useful, academics only consult data-bases when undertaking a specific project;
(iv) journalists are interested in news data-bases but do not seem to be concerned with the possibilities of using non-journalistic bases.

It may be possible to account for these patterns by citing four factors, as follows:

(i) it is expensive for students and researchers to consult data bases; the minimum consultation period is 10 minutes and charges run at around US$70 per hour;
(ii) data bases only offer abstracts; full originals are provided on request, but this takes up to six weeks in the case of international data bases;
(iii) local material is scarce in international data bases;
(iv) lack of awareness about the existence and content of data bases is widespread; data bases are not consulted simply because they exist, and potential users need to know what they are and where to find the appropriate one.

The present study organized a survey of 48 Chilean journalists from different media as a representative sample of the 500 editors, writers and reporters working for the nationally-influential media. The survey was concerned with four main areas:

(i) personal experience of computerized information and its use in newsrooms;
(ii) experience of information research, particularly the use of data-bases;
(iii) the training needs created by new technology;
(iv) views of future developments.

The full results of this survey are presented in an annex to this article. Here we only draw out and comment on the most important features of the responses.

The majority of those surveyed had only recently made contact with computers: in 58 per cent of cases the first contact was reported as taking place between 1983 and 1985 (the date of the survey). This contact was mostly as a result of exogenous factors such as 'a company decision'. Sixty-six per cent of respondents gave this answer as opposed to only 11 per cent who claimed that their first contact was the result of 'personal initiative'. This explains why they tend to visualize the computer as a word-processor rather than as something that can transform the journalistic environment.

Behind the answers lies an evident desire to keep up to date. The majority of those surveyed (65 per cent) considered that they could not continue working as before, while an important segment (48 per cent) considered that they were now living in a new phase of the editor-writer relationship.

Alongside the survey, an Analysis Workshop on the Journalistic Situation was organized. In this, many journalists reported that their encounter with computerization was closely related to their experiences during the last phase of the authoritarian period. At the 1989 Workshop, recent graduates of college journalism courses and young professionals stressed three basic concerns:

(a) Communications and journalism schools are far behind in their efforts to educate students in the possibilities offered by new technologies. The recovery of democracy demands a professional who is capable of handling these resources in order to construct solid and real news. Schools should be hives of active experimentation. Today, schools of journalism have been outstripped by initiatives that originate beyond the University.
(b) Computerization and access to data banks may relate journalists to 'colder' news sources and thus create a less hyperkinetic form of professional practice. Journalistic creativity can continue to flourish in these conditions if its basic purpose is to produce useful and attractive material for the public.
(c) The new technologies certainly develop new trends in the labour market, but they also produce new opportunities for professional practice. The production of magazines and specialized bulletins, their distribution by electronic mail, the creation of information and consultancy bureaux and the creation of data bases and banks all embody new opportunities for journalists and information professionals.

One major conclusion of the workshop was that the recovery of democracy in some countries, and the need to improve it in others, has brought about a situation in which it is necessary to define journalism as an activity that requires the capacity to *mediate through criticism* in order to become more efficient and modern. Journalism professionals must analyze the new experiences and define new rules of conduct for themselves and new production practices.

Within that framework, the relation with the new technologies must be seen as 'access to the tools for dialogue'. What journalists expect is that these tools will be transparent to them, so that they may be fully incorporated into news practice and provide the basis for a modern journalistic discourse that may be specified as:

Data + Report + Context.

Behind the formula is the need to deliver these three components in harmony, recovering the deep concern for data and information inherent in industrial journalism, especially that of the United States. On the other hand, there is the need to take from debates centred on a New International Information Order the demands for more context and the locating of an event within the processes immediately preceding it. Exact, elaborate and clear facts are required to support the journalistic text. A report rich in description and quotation which unites the diverse components of an event favours the natural diversity and plurality of life. Finally, the powerful emphasis on the elaboration of the context helps the media confront increasing demands, especially acute in the written media, that they give an account of the 'why' of an event. The challenge is to produce journalistic accounts in which things are made visible by the *precision* used to situate them, the *description* that identifies them and the *explanation* that provides a proper historical location.

The practice of this kind of journalism leads to work on what was called at the 1989 Workshop 'active juxtaposition'. By this is meant that accounts of events may be produced in the traditional journalistic manner, using graphical material derived from statistics and other sources, the usual bureaucratic methods of accumulating and synthesizing memoranda and so on, surveys and polls, quotations and historical documents that have relevance for contemporary events and the reproduction of texts and illustrations from elsewhere. Taken together and juxtaposed, these constitute a synergy at a higher level of relevance and information for the reader.

New technologies and the increase of expressive capacities

The transformation to democracy in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay was marked by similar features: there existed a substantial industrial base with the capacity for utilizing advanced technologies, but its potential was limited by the supply of competent professionals capable of working with it and getting the most out of it within the confines of political pluralism and current democratic institutions. The need for an examination of the potential of these technologies with regard to the capacity for self-expression present in each society is emphasized when we consider the following factors:

(a) the possibility of an increase in local communication and cultural identity when viewed from the global or transnational perspective of the permanent expansion of communication;

(b) the possibility of originating new networks within countries, as well as on a regional level, with the purpose of increasing political, economic and cultural collaboration among Latin American countries.

The case studies described below illustrate these questions.

Cable TV in Argentina

A national colour TV system was established in Argentina in 1978 as a means of covering the World Soccer Championships held there that year. The ABC Colour station was technically advanced, but an analysis of the news transmitted shows that 'spectacle journalism' dominated the output.

In 1980, with the expansion of cable, the audio-visual space in Argentina began to expand. Although the initial aim was to make TV available in remote areas, the system quickly expanded in the big cities as well. In December 1980 the Communitary Closed Circuit TV Association of Argentina was founded and by 1987 had seventy active members. In addition to these, some forty manufacturers of technical equipment and materials and service suppliers were 'joint associates'. The long-debated Law on Radio Propagation provided *de facto* authorization for these systems to disseminate advertising.

At the end of 1987, the President of the Association stated that 116 cable stations were currently in existence in Argentina. Of these, 48.7 per cent were in the capital and province of Buenos Aires and 51.3 per cent in the interior. Nearly 40,000 homes were served by these stations. Subscribers closely identified with their channel and the system produced a wide variety of messages in the artistic, news, cultural, education and sports fields.[1] Despite a severe economic crisis, the use of cable TV has increased since 1982. An explanation of this is that middle-class families in particular, prevented by prevailing socio-economic conditions from visiting the cinema or the theatre, have looked increasingly to TV as the source of their entertainment .

When we come to analyze the contribution of cable to freedom of speech in Argentina, we find that the system reproduces the same plurality as the national broadcast channels. According to Roberto Cenderelli, the cable channels are really like video clubs and TV innovations will have to come from the broadcast channels. We may say that in the case of Argentina there has been an expansion of the technological resources available but, given the political stage upon which this modernization has taken place, censorship and the restriction of expression and local cultural factors have remained in place and to some extent increased.

Video and TV in Chile

The Chilean case is similar. There are extended networks throughout the country: the National Chilean Television Network (TVN), has 132 receiving stations, five of which have an independent capacity. There are also some minor networks linked to university-owned stations, the most important of which is Channel 13, covering most of the central region. Although these stations have improved their equipment and increased their transmission capacity — for example TVN signed an agreement with Panamsat — the real developments have been in the area of independent production companies.

A survey conducted for this study identified 22 main production companies, some of which have the same facilities as a medium-sized TV channel, except for transmission. This is a development of the last decade and is in large part due to the favourable dollar-exchange rate and free-market economic policies. These companies began operations in the commercial and advertising sphere but have since developed an 'expressive' capacity that enabled the leading ones to provide, for instance, the material for the fifteen minutes of free transmission time that allowed the democratic political forces grouped in the Concerted Parties for Democracy to present the case for voting 'no' in the plebiscite. For the first time, the national public saw a new television language, a new image and a new attitude towards journalistic investigations.

Important sectors of independent production earn their livelihood from advertising and this has enabled them to develop highly-skilled teams who dedicate their spare time to the production of 'independent video'. Because of the favourable exchange rate and low import taxes, there has been a steady rise in the number of video -recorders in Chile. Some 140,000 recorders were imported in 1988 and the official number known to be in the country rose to 245,000. If we include unofficial imports, it may be estimated that in 1989 there were more than 300,000 machines in the country.

The possibility of using this new technology as a channel for free speech was already recognized in the 1970s. In

1978, the ICTUS theatre company, with support from the Netherlands, organized a project for the production of independent documentaries and dramas aimed at low-income groups and social organizations. Between 1980 and 1983 there was a development of the use of video to record collective memory and social and political events not shown on TV. By 1985 there was widespread production and circulation of independent videos. 'Video art' was widely used by plastic artists and an annual festival showing the best productions organized. A regular 'video news-sheet', *Teleanalisas*, was launched by an independent magazine and distributed monthly through subscriptions to individuals and organizations linked to the church and political parties. In April 1988, *Teleanalisas*, together with ICTUS and other organizations, held the first Latin American Meeting of Alternative Video. The professional skills acquired in these projects meant that at the end of the 1980s it was possible in Chile to develop new TV channels and provide them with plural and democratic programme schedules of a high standard.

In the second half of 1989 there was active discussion of the need for new radio services and high expectations of founding new TV stations, particularly in the UHF band of the spectrum. Political groups, private entrepreneurs and media professionals are now seeking to run TV stations. According to a study published by the Centre for Public Studies (CEP), a private TV station would represent good income-generating prospects. The study shows that the cost of establishing a full production and transmission service for a small TV station serving the Santiago urban area would be in the region of US$1.2 million plus 16 per cent local taxation.[2]

Cable TV and the new audio-visual space

TV channels are only one of the new potential audio-visual spaces opening up. Another is the expansion of parabolic antennas with the capacity of delivering satellite signals directly into the home. The commercial installation of these devices began in Chile in 1968. Among the first customers were mining and agricultural companies, hotels and private homes. In 1988 installation costs ranged from US$2,300 for a dish capable of receiving one channel to US$9,000 for a system capable of receiving signals from all four of the satellites whose footprints cover Chile.[3] Our own study in February 1989 suggests that a medium-sized antenna costing US$3,000 would give access to 10 channels: three from Argentina, two United States Government information channels, 2 United Kingdom channels, 1 Spanish channel and one each from Cuba and the USSR. For US$7,000, 14 channels were available: those mentioned, plus CNN, Chilean National Television and channels from Peru and Venezuela. At a cost of US$10,000, a powerful antenna would give 31 channels: those mentioned, RAI from Italy, three major Brazilian channels, various American entertainment channels and one sports channel.

It is not yet possible to say exactly what the implications of these possibilities will be. There appears to be some contradiction between the desire to develop regional TV and the likely impact of an international TV system. Debates about the viability of developing local stations suggest the following conclusions:

(a) Local TV will gain in strength and identity only if it realizes that it must co-exist with satellite TV. It should therefore concentrate on representing the aspirations and imagination of the local community in which it exists.
(b) The development of antennas for community use in buildings, housing projects and so on will help the development of cable companies which aim to cover small areas. As is already the case in other Latin American countries, these will offer the benefit of free reception, charging subscribers for the distribution of services.
(c) Any analysis of Chilean TV developments in the 1990s which considers only the transformation and democratization of the large channels must be partial and outdated. The audiovisual space is being expanded as the TV screen becomes a multiple-offer terminal with both national and international services available.

So far, however, cable TV has not expanded significantly. In 1984 a decree allowed a company called Intercom, linked to the *El Mercurio* group, to provide services in three high-income areas of Santiago. Its expansion has been modest. For a subscription of US$20 per month a service consisting almost entirely of US transmissions is provided, plus a videotext service of news from the editorial offices of *El Mercurio*. From the point of view of freedom of speech, this service makes an insignificant contribution, since only English-speaking subscribers have been able to benefit from access to such debates as the one relating to the US presidential election.

Networks and microcomputers

The use of microcomputers and computer networks creates the space for greater freedom of speech. The development in Chile has been rapid. In 1987, 18,000 personal computers (PCs) were imported into Chile, and the same figure was reached in the first half of 1988. In February 1989 it was estimated that there were 51,000 PCs in use in Chile. During the first 10 months of 1988, computer imports were valued at US$736 million, representing an increase of 37 per cent over the previous year.[4]

The communication possibilities presented by these machines can only be understood in relation to the expansion of the telephone network which has been very rapid indeed. At the end of 1987 there were an estimated 700,000 telephone lines in Chile and the development plan of the Chilean Telephone Company (ENTAL) for that year called for the installation of 129,000 new lines in 29 cities throughout the country in 1989-1990. Projections to the end of 1992 propose an investment of US$1.2 million in order to reach a total of 1.3 million lines, 50 per cent of which will be linked to digital exchanges.[5]

Digitalization is one of the hallmarks of the new competitive environment brought about by the denationalization of companies in the field. ENTAL-Chile, now a private corporation, is digitalizing transmission throughout the country in order to increase telephone and data traffic. It has set up a subsidiary, the National Network for Data Transmission, which will implement the package commutation technology used by the majority of networks internationally. This technique provides for communications amongst multiple users without fixed charges. Rather, payment is in proportion to use, and costs fall progressively. In addition, there are two other companies — VTR and Chilepac — operating in the field. This situation is unusual in the developed, let alone the developing, world and some commentators have described it as chaotic.

These developments have led to changes in work practices not only in private business but in the academic field and for institutions concerned with social development. During the past 15 years, more than 200 non-governmental organizations have been set up in Chile. During the last couple of years some of these have started to set up data banks and coordination networks, and the communications media are just starting to discover these as a source of information.

In the course of 1988, three Workshops on Journalism and Computerized Information were held in Chile, involving a total of 75 professionals. Their aim was to familiarize journalists who had access to microcomputers with the existing data banks in both academic and government institutions in order to help them find information useful to their work. These workshops examined the following points:

(i) Connection and information research within the 146 conferences presently included in the Peacenet system, particularly those concerned with Central America, disarmament and global ecology.

(ii) Interaction with Latin American databases (Desco in Peru and Ibase in Brazil) whose response to requests for information takes no more than one or two hours.

(iii) Use of the 'El Coordinador' programme for information production and the collation of information from such institutions as FLASCO, CIDE (in the field of education) and SUR (which is concerned with grass-roots social actors), as well as other political figures who have adapted their personal computers to this system. Three special reports resulting from these exercises were published in the local press, in addition to the additional skills gained by the participants. One very important lesson was the possibility of communication using a much cheaper de-phased system rather than through direct on-line access. The information requested was sent direct to the hard-disc of the user, at a very high transmission speed, saved directly and then, after disconnection, made available for more leisurely work.

The result was an experimental process whereby a press room made contact with three institutions with requests for information. The answers, used by the journalists in line with their specific objectives, provided the basis for the whole reportage of a publication. The most important consequence of these experiments was the fact that they pointed to new information sources within civil society. If we consider democracy as a process of permanent research and transformation, the freedom to propose alternatives is a necessary condition for its functioning. In that case, information becomes a development resource. Information is no longer the exclusive preserve of the mass media, and it no longer solely obeys the industrial logic of their production. Information can also be distributed, processed and multiplied within civil society by means of computerization. The result is three factors of enormous importance to the professional activities of journalists:

(i) they have to identify a plurality of information sources and know how to contact them;

(ii) they need to reflect socio-political diversity with precision, showing the social actors who represent this diversity;

(iii) they need to identify the alternatives, the new political discourses and expressions, that emerge in open, free and creative dialogue amongst social institutions, thanks to the use of technological networks and the new instruments that computerized information is making available.

National policies on new technologies

National communication policies have been central topics of debate at least since the 1970s. New technologies have presented new problems that have been insoluble with concepts, like the sovereignty of the national state over its resources, inherited from the nineteenth century. If information has increasingly become a central resource, the fact that it is distributed and received across national boundaries has forced changes in the concept of sovereignty.

Efforts to develop telecommunications in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s were made with the belief that the state as the arbiter of the common good was the appropriate vehicle for such initiatives. New technologies, however, have meant that important sectors of telecommunications activity have been developed by private initiatives and this has been accompanied by a tendency to 'de-regulate' under pressure from Western countries and particularly from United-States-based transnational companies. The political debate in Chile has been conducted within this framework. An example is in the field of video in which a special law, No. 18443, was passed to prevent the circulation of 'pirate videos'.

Telecommunications are controlled by Law No. 18168, known as the General Telecommunications Law, which came into effect on 1 October 1982. This law has the following heads: General Dispositions; Concessions and Authorizations; Exploitation and Operation of Telecommunications Services; Infringements and Sanctions; and a Final Chapter that systematizes previous laws and temporary rules and regulations. These apparently subsidiary matters include one item of cardinal importance: they define the responsibilities and obligations of the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications. Under this ruling, a sub-Ministry with responsibilities in the field of telecommunications is expected to:

(a) propose telecommunications policies;

(b) participate in national and regional planning of telecommunications developments;

(c) ensure that laws, rules, technical regulations and internal dispositions are executed, as well as any international treaties, contracts and agreements relating to telecommunications in Chile, and the national telecommunications policies approved by the Supreme Government;

(d) elaborate and keep up-to-date basic telecommunications plans;
(e) enforce current legal decrees, rules and complementary regulations;
(f) administer and control the electromagnetic spectrum;
(g) dictate technical regulations related to telecommunications and exercise control over their enforcement;
(h) represent the country, in the name of the Chilean Telecommunications Administration, before the International Telecommunications Union and for the purpose of subscribing to telecommunications agreements with other nations in accordance with the authority invested in the Ministry of Foreign Relations;
(i) attribute telecommunications concessions and permits, seeing to their approval, refusal, suspension, nullity and termination according to law;
(j) coordinate with the Ministry of National Defense and other competent institutions the formulation of rules and entrance controls for the import of telecommunications equipment and regulations governing their manufacture and use;
(k) request, and be entitled to receive, from any institution operating in the field of telecommunications and any, public institution, all facts and information necessary to the discharge of its duty;
(l) apply the administrative penalties laid down by the General Law on Telecommunications.

Article 1 of the law defines telecommunications as 'any transmission, emission or reception of signs, signals, written material, images, sounds and information of whatsoever type, via a physical line, radio transmission, optical medium or other electromagnetic system.' In accordance with the Constitution, Article 2 states that 'all citizens of the Republic shall have free and equal access to telecommunications and any person whatsoever may apply for concessions or permits defined by the law, except in those cases where current legislation expresses the contrary.' In line with generally-accepted Latin-American criteria, the law declares that 'free-reception or radio broadcast telecommunications services, public telecommunication services and limited television services shall require a concession authorized by a legal decree for their installation, operation and exploitation.' The law also establishes that the duration of such concessions will be of indefinite duration, except in the case of sound radio broadcasting which will have a duration of 15 years.

Article 29 of the law precisely defines the freedom of action of companies working within a free-market framework. It states: 'Public telecommunication service prices or rates, located within the national territory and transmitting to the exterior, shall be freely agreed upon between the service suppliers and end-users. This shall also apply to intermediate services employed and contracted among the different companies, entities or persons involved in the service.'

Within the framework of this law, the sub-Ministry of Telecommunications dictated Resolution No. 345 on 24 September 1988 establishing technical rules and regulations to operate 'a public data transmission network through package commutation'. This regulation was promulgated in a situation in which there had been two or three years of development of data transmission without any specific legislation determining who had the right to transmit and under what conditions. The resolution stated in particular that:

Data Transmission has faced important developments on both national and worldwide levels;

Telecommunications allow for the multiplication of possibilities in traditional information services, scientific as well as commercial, granting end-users access to the computational power and accumulated information of electronic computers;

It is necessary to establish the telecommunications infrastructure needed to gain access to computerized information systems in order to satisfy the demand for data transmission services;

A Commutation Network should be established, specifically oriented to data transmission, so that such communications may enjoy a high-quality and reliable service;

It is necessary to establish rules and regulations to allow for the flexible development of the Data Network and to establish the necessary conditions to allow this Network to operate in conjunction with other Public Service Communications Networks.

The analysis of this resolution is particularly interesting when one considers the distance that normally separates the technical phenomenon and the legal framework organizing its practical implementation. Article 7 specifically refers to the necessary definitions and abbreviations required to understand the law: this fills four full pages of the legal document. Among the definitions are: Commutation Board, Computerized Information, Data Packaging, Data Station, Data Transmission, Node, Subscribers' Distribution Net and so on. It is quite possible that many aspects of this law are still somewhat mysterious to the non-expert. The importance of the regulation lies in the fact that it officially recognizes the existence of a data transmission service and establishes the position of those authorized as concessionaries, as well as the rights of subscribers and users. Similar legal frameworks have come into force recently in Colombia and Uruguay.

Behind these legal regulations designed for the new technological situation, however, the transition to democracy in some countries in the region has meant that it has become urgent to establish new laws governing more traditional fields such as the press, radio and television. An example of a democratic debate on these questions is the discussions relating to and final texts of the new Constitution of Brazil which was put into effect on 5 October 1988. A rather different example is provided by Chile where the debate on new legislation for these traditional areas of communication is complicated by the process of the return to democracy and the aspiration of some groups to maintain control of sectors of the information and communication industry.

At the start of 1989, the National Government Junta, which had granted itself all legislative powers during the military regime, began studying proposals for a new Press Law and other projects concerning the National Radio and

Television Council. The latter will create the possibility of the expansion of private TV in different audio-visual spaces. The Press-Law project speaks of social communication media as 'daily newspapers, magazines or journalistic write-ups; printed material, signs, posters, commercial notices, monthly inscriptions, catalogues or emblems destined for sale, distribution or exhibition in public places or meetings; radio, television, movies, loudspeakers, photographs and, in general, any instrument for recording, reproducing or transmitting words.' This last provision is particularly important in the case of software. The Chilean computer industry hopes, within a short period, to become an important software exporter within Latin America. A study has shown that 1.2 per cent of the Chilean Gross National Product is in computing. Industrial policies aim at the production of original software.[6] The increasing number of microcomputers, and the use of multiple copies of programmes, led to a situation in which software was being employed under very dubious legal conditions, usually weakly-defined under the copyright laws. An effort to establish order in this field, and rules that would be respected by all parties, was made following a legal dispute in which the American companies Lotus Development and Ashton-Tate accused nearly thirty major Santiago companies, including banks and financial, industrial and service institutions, of using pirated software.

In the case of the National Radio and Television Council, the official proposal is that the Council comprise representatives of the President of the Republic, the Senate and the Supreme Court (one each), two representatives of the National Security Council, and one member of the Institute of Chile. Under this plan, representatives of the university, higher education institutions and television professionals would be excluded, despite the fact that they were present in the past. The powers of the Council are wide-ranging: to grant, renew, modify or cancel radio and television concessions; to sanction stations with suspension of up to one week, a warning or a monetary fine. Modifications have been made to this law by the Executive Power concerning the status of the three existing legally-recognized stations. They will be changed from public corporations to open independent ones. If these proposals were fully implemented, they would mean that the policies of the station would be determined by a Board of Directors answerable to the major stockholders.

The Concerted Parties for Democracy declared that all this legislation would have to be discussed by the Congress and the new President, both to be elected at the end of 1989. They argued that the laws passed by the Military Government after the plebiscite of 5 October 1988 were rushed through in order to transfer important areas of telecommunications and the media to private corporations and institutions linked to the military. The communications media in general, and even some of the official media, considered that such legislation should only be implemented after a full study of the situation. This attitude is in contradiction with the interest in transforming the conditions under which the TV industry is developing.

This is the essence of the question for new policies: how to interpret the new spaces opened up by democracy and the communication situation which will come to exist therein, while at the same time preserving the heritage of the communication structures created in the previous decades.

Professional transformations

The new technological scene described above, and the professional limitations of journalists and administrators in communication media, are leading to the realization that media professionals must face an accelerated re-training programme and that substantial changes have to be made in the education of future journalists and communication professionals. This need for a new type of education not only applies to those who wish to work in information and communication. It also affects general education programmes designed to create a new relationship between citizens and information. Understanding the latter is a basic requirement for modern economic development as well as stable democracy. It is not simply a question of new tools and new products, or facing up to changes in a previously-existing process. What we actually face is a *mutation* that calls for change of mentality on the part of information professionals. The philosopher Dr Fernando Flores, an expert in communications, recently argued that 'the future of computers passes through social communication, not artificial intelligence.' He has developed a conversational-design theory to support the *interaction* in direct and wide-reaching human communication made possible by the new technology. According to this Chilean expert, digital integration and the possibility of synchronization without physical co-presence are the great advantages of the computer which can be exploited in the future:

> Digitalization and globalization of the planet are the facts preparing the field for the birth of an entrepreneurial organization theory which will surpass the hybrid and electric practices in operation until now.[7]

Within the framework of these conceptions, two stages of communication become clearly visible: the industrial complex of mass communications, and the system of social communication networks via computerized information. Journalists and social communication professionals are challenged to look for information and to distribute this information through both fields. At the same time, they have identifying bridges linking one field to another. It is within this perspective that we consider the following as the minimum requirements in training:

Text production skills, working with material directly on video terminals, and using information retrieved from remote sources (data banks, networks, electronic conferences, etc.).

Ability to create data banks in the communication media, as well as in specific fields of the information services; incorporation of information related to new social phenomena and interests (women, ecology, urbanism, regional development, communications, etc.).

The capacity to create networks, with special reference to journalistic interaction among different regional media.

Ability to create new media based on the resources made available by the new technologies (electronic newsletters, information production distributed through fax, specialized directories, etc.).

In the last decade of the century, it appears that the communication system developed one hundred years ago is coming to an end, while a new system, whose characteristics and nature are not yet quite clear, is nevertheless certainly coming into being. When the automobile was invented, many thought it was just a horseless carriage. They did not realize that a new transforming feature of the culture of the entire twentieth century had arrived along with the reality of these four-wheeled motorized artifacts. The same question can be asked now: what is the new culture that is coming with the computer and computerized information, and how are we to live with it? Magic realism, or Latin America's peculiar surrealism, may have here a marvellous opportunity to design its own answers.

Notes

1. S. Schulein, *Cable TV in Argentina*, ILET Latin American TV Studies Program, Working Document, July 1988.
2. Reported in *La Epoca*, January 1989.
3. *La Segunda*, 11 December 1988.
4. *Estrategia*, January 1989.
5. *El Mercurio*, 20 December 1988.
6. *La Segunda*, 13 May 1989.
7. *Diario 16* (Madrid), 22 March 1989.

Annex

Findings of a survey of 48 Chilean journalists from various media

A. *Personal experience with new technologies*

1. *Why did you make contact with the computer?*

Through a company decision	35	66%
Personal initiative	6	11%
Contact with other institutions	2	4%
Other	6	11%
No reply	4	8%

2. *Date at which first contact was made*

1976-79	4	8%
1980-82	9	19%
1983-85	13	27%
1986-88	15	31%
No reply	7	15%

3. *What do you use a computer for?*

	Total Answers	Hierarchization			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Text editing	41	38	3	0	0
Information research	15	2	10	2	1
Filing notes or data	24	1	11	12	0
Other	8	3	1	0	4

4. *Have computers changed your relations with your fellow workers?*

Yes	17	35%
No	25	52%
Don't know	6	13%

5. *Do you like the change?*

Yes	14	29%
No	4	8%
Yes and no	1	2%
Don't know	29	61%

6. *Does this mean a new phase in relations between writers and editors?*

Yes	23	48%
No	10	21%
Yes and no	1	2%
Don't know	4	8%
No reply	10	21%

The replies included the following:
'Only the medium changes';
'The editor has more power to intervene';
'It facilitates corrections and suggestions';
'It means more speed and fluency and less professional interaction';
'It allows the reporter more time'.

7. *Are you as free to choose work as you were before?*

Yes	6	12.5%
No	36	75%
No reply	6	12.5%

8. *What are the advantages of the computer?*

More speed, saves time; more free time;
Permanent storage, cleaner, easily corrected, more orderly;
Simultaneous transmission;
Multiple use of articles;
Data bank connections;
More time before deadlines.
The most frequent answers related to 'speed' and 'time-saving'.

9. *What are the disadvantages of the computer?*

Tiring (visually) — the most common answer, mentioned 16 times
Programme failures and loss of work
Machine dependence

B. *Experience with information research*

1. *Are you acquainted with data banks?*

Yes	25	52%
No	22	46%
No reply	1	2%

Order of frequency of data banks mentioned:

El Mercurio	7
Dicom	2
New York Times	2
Washington Post	2
Stock Exchange	2
Bitnet	2
Chilean universities	5
Foreign universities	3

Mentioned once only:
ERIC, Chilepac, *Los Angeles Times*, *El Commercio* (Lima, Peru), *Die Welt*, Ecom, RCA, Ticcen, *Economic and Financial Survey*, South American Peace Commission.

2. *Do you know how old they are?*

Yes	17	35%
No	30	63%
No reply	1	2%

Dates mentioned:
1970 (4); 1972 (1); 1973 (1); 1978 (1); 1980 (2); 1982 (2); 1984 (1); 1986 (2); 1987 (1); 1988 (2).

3. *Does a data bank have a real value, or is it possible to work as in the past?*

Yes	38	79%
No	7	15%
Don't know	1	2%
No reply	2	4%

Arguments cited:

Speed	22 times
Orderly information	5 times
Larger volume of information	5 times
Combination (none more important)	5 times
Information more complete, less space	2 times

4. *Does your computer have access to data banks?*

Yes	4	8%
No	39	82%
Don't know	4	8%
No reply	1	2%

C. *Training*

1. *Do you feel that you have had enough training to handle a computer?*

Yes	41	85%
No	5	11%
No reply	2	4%

2. *Do you have any suggestions?*

Training, technique handling:	13 times

[This alternative was on occasions accompanied by comments such as: 'lack of training leads to minimal use'; 'training should be provided at journalism colleges'.]

More access to equipment and programmes; increased number of terminals; use should be massive:	12 times
Connection to data bank; build Chilean data bank:	6 times
Limit computer working hours; legislation is needed:	3 times

3. *What changes should there be to the study programme at training colleges?*

Intensive practice in text editing	36 times
Training in the use of data banks	31 times
General computer studies	21 times
Introduction to computer theory	14 times
Other	6 times
None	2 times

4. *What deficiencies are their with regard to 'news sources'?*

Need the possibility of consulting a data base	15 times
Training	5 times
Need knowledge about the availability, type and cost of data bases	3 times
Need more equipment	2 times

5. *Do you foresee a 'generation gap'?*

Yes	15	31%
No	30	63%
Don't know	1	2%
No reply	2	4%

D. *The future*

1. *Will the possibilities of work increase with computerization?*

Yes	33	69%
No	14	29%
Don't know	1	2%

The majority of the alternatives mentioned point to the surmise that a greater degree of independence is possible for the journalist; work is simplified, time is saved, it is possible to work with many media simultaneously, it is possible to produce new products like data bases and market them. Those answering 'no' mention unemployment and the dehumanization of work.

2. *Do you like computerization?*

Yes	33	69%
No	3	6%
Don't know	12	25%

Positive answers repeat responses already cited: simplification of work, greater volume of information, more precision, exactness, speed, time-saving, reliability. Negative answers cite: unemployment, the fact that a poor country should have 'different' priorities for resource-use.

3. *Have there been changes in methods of searching for news and information?*

Yes	21	44%
No	25	52%
Don't know	2	4%

Those answering 'yes' related the changes to the increased availability of facts.
The journalist is better informed than in the past.

4. *Will there be changes in the style of messages?*

Yes	26	54%
No	20	42%
Don't know	2	4%

Those who believe that there will be changes in message style base their response on two sorts of factors:
Formal: information is more exact, complete, short and direct.
In-depth: in view of the greater amount of information available, journalism must be interpretative and facts must be interrelated.
To those who affirm that there will be no changes, the computer is only a medium or instrument and the journalist will continue to define the style.

5. *How will the end-user be affected?*

There will be a more complete, wider and in-depth vision;
It will be more demanding;
The medium will have more credibility in view of the greater amount of information available.

The media as Fourth Estate: a survey of journalism educators' views

Colin Sparks and Slavko Splichal

Introduction

The aim of this project was to investigate the extent to which consideration of the 'Fourth Estate' functions of the media form a part of the training and education of aspirant journalists. The major method by which this aim was pursued was a postal questionnaire despatched to senior figures in Schools of Journalism internationally. We sought their opinion on:

1. Whether in their view the Fourth Estate functions of the media existed in their country. How important they believed these functions to be relative to other functions of the media and how they saw their development in the last decade. What the main dangers were to the exercise of these functions and what kinds of things would strengthen them.

2. What they understood by the term in their own particular media context. Which sections of society tended to attract the attention of the media in this role and to what kinds of problems was the majority of attention directed. Which media tended to play this role.

3. The extent to which teaching about the Fourth Estate functions of the media was embodied in the work of their School and the ways in which it was taught. In which courses it appeared and with which subjects it was associated. How much time was devoted to this subject. Whether all students studied the subject and what the obstacles were to it being taught.

4. Their opinion of the success of their teaching in this field and whether there should be any changes in this work. Whether they thought there should be more or less emphasis on the teaching of this topic and, if change were desirable, what the main obstacles to this were.

We hoped, on the basis of the responses to the questionnaire, to establish an outline of the importance accorded to these issues in the teaching of journalism. More especially, we were interested in whether particular conceptions of the nature and importance of the Fourth Estate led to particular views of the nature and importance of teaching in this field and what, if any, the obstacles were to its successful implementation.

A number of important features of our work need comment at an early point and should be borne in mind throughout this text. The material we gathered represents the opinions of prominent journalism educators and should not be taken as direct evidence of the actual state of affairs existing in any particular country. We provide no evidence for normative judgements about the media situation in any country.[1]

On the other hand, our respondents do reflect informed opinion about the state of journalism. They are all professionally engaged in the study and teaching of subjects associated with journalism and we may suppose many of them to have been active journalists at one time or another. Their opinions, therefore, deserve some attention, provided one bears in mind that evidence of another survey shows that journalism educators tend to attach greater importance to the Fourth Estate functions of the media than do practising journalists.[2]

We were not asked to investigate the concrete content of teaching described in the survey. It would have been very difficult to explore in any depth, for example, details of lecture topics, class assignments or booklists, let alone the quality of educational delivery using a survey technique directed at senior educators. Our data therefore only record the general areas within which teaching occurs and are not a commentary on how well or badly this teaching is done.

Fourth Estate functions of the media

Our project implied, in the first instance, that there was clarity about the meaning of the term 'Fourth Estate'. While most of the sources we consulted recognized the term, there was to our mind a certain confusion over the precise meaning. We felt that we needed to clarify this in order to pursue our investigation. We needed first of all to attempt to understand what the term might cover, and then to identify whether that was adequate for modern conditions.

In order to begin to understand the complexities of the term, it is as well to point out that, while to the English-speaking reader the term, if not its precise meaning, is at least comprehensible, in other languages there is an immediate difference of terminology. French and Spanish speakers consider the media as a 'power', not an 'estate', and use the terms 'Quatrième Pouvoir' and 'Cuarto Poder' respectively.[3] In Swedish, on the other hand, the press is the 'Third Estate'.[4] In Yugoslavia, it is the 'Seventh Power'.

These differences, however, point to a similar conception of the meaning of the term: all these renderings have to do with constitutional formulations. The idea of the press as 'Fourth Estate' entered the English language, so far as we can determine, in the first half of the nineteenth century and was intimately bound up with debates about political democracy.[5] The idea of 'Estates', and in particular the 'Third Estate', had obtained at least a European currency in the wake of the Great French Revolution, and the use of the term 'Fourth Estate' implied a direct link with those debates over sovereignty. So, too, the notion of the press as a 'power' in the Romance languages directs attention to the constitutional provision of the 'division of powers' enshrined in the Constitution of the United States.

Five things should be noted about these early usages, and consideration of subsequent historical developments may lead us to wish to modify those original definitions:[6]

1. First, and very obviously, the precise concerns of the term were with the newspaper press, which was the dominant means of mass communication during the period. Subsequent technical developments have produced the systems of radio and television. These new media have taken over at least some of the traditional functions of the printed word, and we think it will be generally accepted that any contemporary investigation should today use the broader definition of 'the media' rather than restrict itself to the printed press. One of the interesting questions to consider is the way in which the 'Fourth Estate' function of journalism is distributed across the different media.

2. The original usages of the term referred to the press *as* Fourth Estate. This was seen as their sole, or at the very least their central, function. Historical research suggests that this function was indeed central to the bulk of the press during this formative period, although even then a broader definition of the scope of the press would reveal other important functions.[7] Subsequent social development has granted the press a plurality of functions, many of which are quite removed from this original. The media have attracted states eager to exercise social control and businessmen eager to make money; in media being operated in pursuit of these objectives, the Fourth Estate functions of the press have had to compete with other kinds of content. Among the questions that the present survey set out to investigate was the extent to which the Fourth Estate function remains an important part of the press, and the training of journalists in press regimes under different kinds of pressures.

3. The earliest usages of the terms, and indeed the term itself, attribute the Fourth-Estate functions to the press itself. It is not conceived of as a mediator of political and social information between state and population but as actor in the exercise of political power.[8] It was, more or less explicitly, considered as something that acted upon the general population by means of providing and discussing information in much the same way as courts, kings and parliaments did in their wielding of other kinds of social power. Subsequently, traditions of thinking about the mass media have tended to distinguish quite sharply between the role of the media as providers of information about political and social life, which has come to be seen as their Fourth Estate function proper, and their role in forming and shaping public opinion, which is often conceptualized as being antithetical to the proper discharge of the Fourth Estate function. In part at least this early conception arose from the fact that the franchise in the first part of the Nineteenth Century was everywhere extremely restricted. It was by no means self-evident that the press itself was identified with the drive to extend the franchise and establish political democracy, and it made sense in a society governed by élite groups that were only partially subject to popular control to conceive of the press as one of the mechanisms by which such groups formed their views and exercised their power. Subsequent extensions of the franchise have called that assumption into question, but since the modern media are often owned either by the state itself or by élite groups, it remains an important object of investigation to determine whether the media today, in discharging their Fourth Estate function, actually play the role of direct political actors or merely facilitate the exercise of political power by the enfranchised. Furthermore, journalism as an occupation has changed somewhat over time, becoming much more 'professionalized', and this has perhaps changed the relationship of journalists to the powerful, on the one hand, and to their readers, on the other.

4. The very terminology of the title marks it as concentrated upon political power conceived of, in the narrowest sense, as direct state power. In the epoch in which the term was coined, social power was predominantly wielded through political mechanisms: the state was the natural focus of attention for those concerned with the running of society. Clearly, while the state remains the largest and most important locus of power in all of the varieties of modern society, in a number of cases there are very large organizations — businesses, political parties, trade unions, and so on — that either have considerable power or are perceived as doing so. In the light of these considerations we thought it essential to widen our conception of the Fourth Estate function in order to take account of changed social realities.

5. A further important factor was that changing historical circumstances since the term was originally used have tended to make it the subject of ideological contention. Since we were charged with a study of world scope and wished to encourage participation from countries with different social and political systems, we were concerned to avoid the danger of designing a research instrument that would, by its very wording, reduce the opportunities for meaningful responses. This difficulty became acute when we considered the possible responses that might be made by scholars working in, for example, China. There, we were reliably informed, the idea of the press as Fourth Estate was certainly taught, but in the context of its function as an ideological mystification of the claims of private ownership. On the other hand, some of the concrete functions with which the term Fourth Estate is commonly associated in other societies were indeed taught as being important functions of the press and as important roles for journalists and have informed the actual functioning of the press for a long period.[9]

In the light of these considerations, we decided to adopt a much broader definition of the term than the strict usage

TABLE 1

ORIGINAL LIST OF COUNTRIES TO BE STUDIED

Africa	*Americas*	*Arab States*	*Asia*	*Europe*	*Oceania*
Ghana	Brazil	Egypt	India	Denmark	Australia
Kenya	Colombia	Lebanon	Japan	Poland	
Nigeria	Mexico		Malaysia	Spain	
Senegal	USA			UK	
				Yugoslavia	

Total: 19 countries

might suggest. When designing our research instrument, we rendered the term Fourth Estate into the clumsier, but less historically and ideologically loaded, category of 'the critical and supervisory functions of the media'. This, we believe, encapsulates the functions that are commonly held to be essential to the modern meaning of the term. Naturally, it is never possible to avoid the dangers of conscious or unconscious bias in the design and conduct of research, but we believe that it is the duty of the conscientious researcher, particularly when engaged in the difficult area of comparative work, to be prepared to sacrifice terms and concepts that have a clarity and simplicity within one intellectual framework in order to employ clumsier, and perhaps less familiar, expressions that are more acceptable internationally.[10]

The choice of such relatively unfamiliar terms raised the additional difficulty that there would be a greater than normal ambiguity in the questions, and thus non-comparability in the answers. This is always an acute problem in carrying out quantitative research across different languages and cultures and we attempted to minimize it by providing a gloss upon our usage. This allowed us to specify rather more clearly the scope of our enquiry and the nature of our intentions. We identified the Fourth Estate functions of the media in the following terms:

> In this context it stands for those functions of the media in which they take an independent and critical stand towards some powerful individual or institution. It is intended to include the reporting of actions or plans which could have major effects on the public; the investigation of possible abuses of power, whether political, social or economic; the defence of citizens' rights against actual abuses of power. The term was, historically, first used for the newspaper press but (we) have here broadened it to include newspaper and magazine press, radio and TV, and used the generic term 'media' for all of these.[11]

In designing the questionnaire we thus adopted a fairly broad and modern approach to the Fourth Estate. We believe that this is justified by the actual state of the world. In most countries today there are both press and broadcasting systems. Power in society is seldom exclusively political in form. It is therefore preferable to design research with these realities in mind than to rely upon a strict but now antiquated interpretation.

The survey

The main research instrument in this survey was a 28-item Questionnaire, designed and developed in English. The initial design was tested on a number of collaborators internationally and, in the light of their responses, some questions were deleted and some added, possible responses were altered and re-ordered, and the range of values to multi-value responses modified. The final version was produced in English and then translated into Chinese, French, Japanese and Spanish.[12]

The target population

Our brief was to produce material on the role of the idea of the media as Fourth Estate in Schools of Journalism internationally: thus our potential respondents were to be found in every institution. Since the number of teachers in these institutions is much too large for us to handle, we restricted our enquiries to the top individual in each institution, whom we assumed would be the person best placed to give the official position of the school. We agreed with UNESCO as sponsors of the research project that while we would attempt to collect data from as wide a range of countries as possible, we would make an additional effort to obtain data on a narrower group. The countries were chosen to represent the major regions of the world and a wide range of different social systems and levels of development. The original countries are listed in Table 1.

We anticipated that it would be possible to obtain data in around 75 per cent of the cases we prioritized in this list and thus felt that we might expect a minimum of 15 different countries to provide information. With the sole exception of Australia, for which our contacts were limited, the list of countries was designed to maximize our chances of having at least one respondent from each of the areas in the event of one non-response. On this basis, collaborators were sought and lists of addresses compiled. It quickly became apparent from this exercise that the degree of completion of our listings varied very widely from nation to nation. In some countries, for example the People's Republic of China, Denmark, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Poland, Spain, the United States and some others, it was possible to obtain more or less complete lists of Schools of Journalism. This revealed that there were very substantial variations in the numbers of

TABLE 2

LIST OF COUNTRIES RESPONDING

Africa	*Americas*	*Arab States*	*Asia*	*Europe*	*Oceania*
Cameroon	Brazil	Algeria	China (N.R.)	Bulgaria	Australia
Kenya	Canada	Egypt	China (P.R.)	Denmark	
Liberia	Chile	Lebanon	India	Finland	
Nigeria	Colombia		Indonesia	France	
	Costa Rica		Japan	F.R.Germany (1989)	
	Cuba		Korea (Rep.)	Ireland	
	Ecuador		Malaysia	Netherlands	
	Jamaica		Philippines	Norway	
	Mexico		Thailand	Poland	
	Panama			Spain	
	Uruguay			Sweden	
	USA			UK	
	Venezuela			Yugoslavia	

Total: 43 countries

schools in different countries. To take two extremes about which we had excellent information: in the United States among more than three hundred Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, while in Poland there are three.

Implementation of survey

Having designed, tested and prepared translations of the Questionnaire and compiled as detailed a list of addressees as possible, the survey was sent out in early March 1989. In the majority of cases it was sent by mail and the letter contained a pre-addressed reply envelope. In the cases of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and Malaysia, bulk supplies of the Questionnaire were sent to collaborators who administered the survey locally and returned it directly to London.

The majority of replies came within two months of the dispatch of the Questionnaire, but responses were still being received in December 1989. At this point, we were obliged to close the list of respondents in order to conduct data analysis. At the time of writing, two further replies had been received.[13] The period during which the research took place is of some importance, since a number of countries from which replies were received experienced certain political changes in the course of 1989 which may have had some influence on the opinions we were seeking. For the majority of our respondents, the situation upon which they were commenting was the one prevailing in the Spring of 1989, and in none of the cases for which late replies were received are we aware of dramatic events having taken place between the dispatch of the survey and the receipt of the reply.

The response

From the 935 copies of the Questionnaire that we sent to 100 countries, we received a total of 302 replies from 43 countries by 31 December 1989.[14] This constituted a response rate of 32 per cent. Of our respondents, 70 (23.2 per cent) described themselves as 'Dean', 'Director' or similar senior administrator. Another 135 (44.7 per cent) described themselves in academic terms as 'Professor' or similar. A further 83 cases (27.5 per cent) did not fall readily into either of these categories and were coded as 'Other', while 14 (4.6) did not answer this question. Of the institutions replying, 268 (88.7 per cent), were universities or the equivalent. Five (1.7 per cent) were state-run training schools, and 5 (1.7 per cent) privately-run training schools. Another 24 (8 per cent) fitted into none of these categories and were categorized as 'Other'. The typical respondent to our Questionnaire was thus an academic in a university-based School of Journalism.

As Table 2 shows, the geographical coverage was particularly encouraging. We managed to meet our target of obtaining responses from a wide variety of different country-types. Our respondents include most types of social system and most levels of economic development. We may claim with some confidence that we carried out our brief and collected data on all the main regions of the world. In all the groupings of countries, we obtained at least as wide a range of responding countries as we had been asked to provide. This is fairly apparent in Table 2.

In designing our study we anticipated that it would be difficult to obtain responses from some regions of the world, and so were prepared to accept a relatively limited total of responding countries: fifteen countries covering the main regions of the world was our minimum expectation. Of the countries listed in Table 1 above, the only ones from which we were unable to obtain replies were Ghana and Senegal.[15]

On the other hand, we obtained two other national responses in Africa which replaced them. In all of the other regions, we were fortunate enough to receive responses not only from the countries that we originally selected, but several other instances too. We may therefore consider the geographical range of the survey a genuine success.

On the other hand, the overall figure for responses, and the overall response rate, conceal some very important divergences that have implications for the status of the results we present below. By far the largest group of responses, 139 or 46 per cent of the total, came from the United States. On the other hand, there were 21 countries from which there was only a single response, and 17 countries from which between one and ten responses were received. These sharp differences in total numbers invite some commentary.

In the case of the United States, the explanation for the large number of responses lies in the fact that we sent many more questionnaires there. The 139 responses represent a return rate of 30 per cent of the 470 copies that were sent out. This high figure for our target population was firstly a function of the fact that journalism education is very highly developed in the United States: there are quite simply a very large number of schools of journalism, and schools teaching journalism, in the United States available to respond to such a survey. Secondly, due to the good offices of our American colleagues, we were able to obtain extremely good listings of the addresses of these institutions.

The lower figures for other countries do not, however, necessarily imply that our coverage of journalism education was less complete in those cases, or that journalism educators have less interest in the scientific study of their work. In fact, the American response rate was rather lower than that obtained from some other countries, even at a lower level of social and economic development. Thus we are advised by our local collaborators that the 3 replies from Poland represent a 100 per cent response-rate from Polish schools of journalism, as do in their respective cases the 8 from Malaysia and the 27 from the People's Republic of China. With a lower degree of certainty, but nevertheless with some confidence, we can say that the one reply from Jamaica represents the total of schools of journalism for that country. We strongly suspect, also, that some of the other single responses are in the same case, but do not have sufficient information to be certain. In other cases, for example, India, it is fairly clear that the small number of responses is not a function of either the small number of schools of journalism or the small number of addresses we were able to obtain.

The final case is of countries like Japan, the United Kingdom and West Germany, where we are fairly confident that we were able to obtain good, if not necessarily complete, lists of addresses of Schools of Journalism and from which we obtained varying response rates. The relatively small size of these totals compared with the United States, in which similar social and economic conditions prevail, may be explained in terms of the very much smaller number of schools of journalism in these countries.

In all cases other than those in which our coverage of the schools of journalism in a particular country is complete, and in which the population is the same as the sample, our responses naturally will not represent a properly random sample. They will, in all cases, over-represent the institutions in which there is a keener commitment to scholarship and international studies. The same is true, *a fortiori*, of the global sample, in which the added problems of unequal time and resources, communications difficulties and so forth have further acted as obstacles to response. These limitations are of course present in all surveys relying on postal returns of questionnaires and they pose some problems for the analysis of data.

The Fourth Estate function described

Respondents were asked to say which aspects of their society attracted the most attention from the media in the exercise of their Fourth Estate functions. As in many of the questions, they were not asked to make exclusive choices, but rather to select from a list and grade their responses on a three-point scale. The results are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS CHOOSING SPECIFIED FUNCTION

	A great deal	*Some*	*Very little*	*Missing*
National state structures	61.6	22.8	11.9	3.6
Political parties	58.9	26.8	10.6	3.6
Industry	31.8	52.3	12.3	3.6
Trade unions	22.5	48.0	25.2	4.3
Private individuals	17.2	47.4	30.1	5.3

N = 302

Respondents thought that national state structures and political parties were the sections of society most likely to attract a great deal of attention from the media in this mode of operation. Individuals and trade unions were thought to attract the least attention, while industry was placed somewhere in-between. The small number of respondents choosing another locus suggests that these are in fact thought to be the major ones.

We can see some evidence of the overall ranking of the different sections of society if we treat the choices as having a numerical value of 1 to 3 and find the mean for each section of society. This gives us a score of 1.48 for the state machine and 1.50 for political parties, while industry scores 1.80 as opposed to 2.03 and 2.14 for trade unions and private individuals respectively. Since we shall use these constructed means quite frequently in what follows, it should be noted that they do not give absolute values for the importance placed on the topics, since different respondents might interpret the distances between different answers as representing difference in value. We can only use these to give an idea of the relative balance of responses within one question. In this case the balance suggests that the respondents believe that the traditional locus of the Fourth Estate functions of the media in the political life of the state remains the strongest. Despite the growth of large scale organizations in 'civil society', these are less the focus of attention from the media and, despite claims that some types of media tend to concentrate on the lives of private individuals, it was not believed that these were the subject of attention with respect to this function.

On the other hand, when we investigated what type of actor attracted the attention of the media in this role, we found that the errors of individuals were the most likely to be reported. Fully 53.3 per cent of respondents thought that individual errors were subject to a great deal of attention, while only 9.6 thought they attracted none, with a mean of 1.54. Then 46.4 per cent thought the shortcomings of institutions attracted a great deal of attention while 7.9 per cent thought they attracted none, with a mean of 1.60. Only 19.5 per cent thought that the failures of the social system as a whole attracted a great deal of attention, while 38.7 per cent thought these attracted none; in this case the mean was 2.20.

Thus while respondents believe that the media continue to play the traditional role of investigating and exposing the state and political parties, they tend to think that this is most often a matter of concentrating on individual, or at most institutional, failings rather than analyzing problems as the product of any systemic failures.

Overall, it was believed that the national media played the most important role in carrying out the Fourth Estate function; 63.6 per cent of respondents thought that the national media often carried out this function, as opposed to 16.2 per cent for local media and 16.9 per cent for regional media. When broken down by categories, the same pattern was repeated. When respondents were asked to choose from a list of media at different levels, without any restriction of numbers, which carried out these functions, the largest percentage was with the national level, with only two exceptions. As Table 4 shows, daily newspapers and television were thought to be the most prominent media in carrying out this function. The two exceptions were both of a more 'marginal' kind and in these cases the local level was deemed most important. This result is quite consistent with the belief that the major focus of the media in this role is on national state structures and political parties, since the activities of the former tend naturally to be controlled at the national level, where many political parties operate, too.

The national media, however, tend to be the most highly 'professionalized' of the sectors and the one with the closest contacts with, and best access to, the national centres of power. We were therefore particularly interested in what were perceived as the initiating forces in the exercise of this function of the media. As we argued in 'Fourth Estate functions of the media' above, with the advent of democracy, the nature of the Fourth Estate function should, in theory at least, change from being one mainly concerned with the mechanisms by which an élite group informs itself and forms its decisions to one in which the public has the central role. While the evidence above, with for example the importance it gives to the broadcast media, would tend to suggest that the function is today perceived as a properly universal one so far as distribution is concerned, it remains unclear as to whether the citizens and their concerns also form the starting point.

TABLE 4

RATING OF MEDIA IN CARRYING OUT FOURTH ESTATE FUNCTIONS

	Total no.	Of which national %
TV	332	68
Radio	261	49
Daily newspapers	456	46
Weekly newspapers	219	45

In order to clarify this point we asked what in the respondents' opinions was the role played by different sections in initiating these functions. The results are summarized in Table 5. It is clear from this that the initiating forces in the Fourth Estate functions of the media are firstly media professionals, with a mean of 1.66, and secondly powerful sources, for whom the mean is 1.74. The general public play a very minor role in setting this function in motion, and their mean is 2.32. The extent to which the function is perceived as being democratized thus seems to be limited in the sense that it is seen as being for the people but not from the people. The importance attributed to the large and very professionalized national media, particularly television, suggests that there is little direct input from the public. TV internationally tends either to be part of a very large business, as for example in the United States, or more or less owned by the state machine, as for example in the United Kingdom, and it characteristically has a highly bureaucratized structure. Studies of national TV news staffing suggest that there is little direct contact with the actual audience.[16] The conception of the Fourth Estate function held by the majority of our respondents is thus one in which the presumed beneficiaries of its exercise can play very little direct role other than as consumers.

How important is the Fourth Estate function?

The overwhelming majority of respondents believed that this function of the media was present in their country. Out of 302 replies, 291 (96.4 per cent) held the view that the function existed.[17] What is more, 143 respondents (47.4 per cent), making up nearly half the total and by far the largest body of opinion, held that the exercise of these functions had increased in the last decade. Against this, only 47 replies (15.6 per cent) held that there had been a decrease.

As a record of opinion about the direction of movement, this is a remarkably optimistic picture, but in order to get a clearer picture one must also take into account the importance ascribed to the function. A direction of movement can be misleading since it can be the same both for a category rated as very unimportant and for one rated as very important. In this instance, the Fourth Estate functions were rated fairly highly by respondents, with a mean of 1.66. When

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY OF INITIATION OF FOURTH ESTATE FUNCTION

	Very often	*Occasionally*	*Not very often*	*Missing*
		Number and percentage		
Powerful sources	117 (38.7)	130 (43.0)	41 (13.6)	14 (4.6)
Media professionals	134 (44.4)	130 (43.0)	33 (10.9)	5 (1.7)
The general public	39 (12.9)	119 (39.4)	130 (43.0)	14 (4.6)
N = 302				

TABLE 6

RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS MEDIA FUNCTIONS

	Very important	*Quite important*	*Not very important*	*Missing*
		Number and percentage		
Information	267 (88.4)	27 (8.9)	4 (1.3)	4 (1.3)
Education	147 (48.7)	113 (37.4)	35 (11.6)	7 (2.3)
Entertainment	130 (43.0)	128 (42.4)	40 (13.2)	4 (1.3)
Mobilization and organization	70 (23.2)	134 (44.4)	87 (28.2)	11 (3.6)
Critical and supervisory	145 (48.0)	106 (35.1)	44 (14.6)	7 (2.3)
N = 302				

asked to say how important various functions were for the media in their own country, they gave the ratings recorded in Table 6. The Fourth Estate functions are clearly regarded as being of some considerable importance, but the provision of information is seen as easily the most important, with a mean of 1.12. Our special concern is rated slightly above, but very close to, the entertainment function of the media, at a mean of 1.70, in its rank order of importance.

The two functions of the media are, however, seen as being very closely related. Fully 94.5 per cent of those who thought that the Fourth Estate functions of the media were very important also thought that the information functions of the media were very important and 95.3 per cent of those who thought the Fourth Estate functions were quite important thought that the information functions were very important too. There was no statistically significant relationship between the importance assigned to the Fourth Estate and its changes in importance, if any, in the last decade, but it is interesting that those who rate the importance of this function highly tend to think that it has increased in importance.

If we consider the rating given to the Fourth Estate functions of the media together with the rating given to the amount of attention paid to the national state structures, then we have a measure of the degree to which any particular respondents rate their own media system with respect to what we may call the 'classical model' of the Fourth Estate functions. By this we mean that accounts of the role of press as Fourth Estate in the last century, and prescriptive writing about the media in this century, both tend to suggest that the Fourth Estate function of the media is the important function, or at least one of the most important functions. These accounts also tend to argue that the media properly exercise this function with respect to the centres of political power in a country. The higher a system is rated on these two measures, the closer it may be said to approximate to this classical model. While the majority of respondents tend towards granting classical status to their own systems, as we shall show below, there are very considerable variations in the degree to which the classical model is universal.

The major external obstacle to the media carrying out its Fourth Estate role was perceived as state secrecy, which was seen as being very important by 142 (47 per cent) respondents and had a mean score of 1.65. The next three were political pressure, with a score of 1.80, economic constraints at 1.87, and pressure from owners at 1.95. Journalistic inadequacies, the remedy of which might be thought the province of education, were seen as relatively unimportant obstacles compared with these political and economic pressures. Scoring 1.94, it ranked fifth in order of importance, but was still identified as very important by 90 respondents (29.8 per cent of the total).

The picture of the importance of politico-economic factors which prevent the media discharging this function properly was supplemented by the respondents' estimates of the 'subjective' considerations that might lead the media to curtail their activities of their own accord. Concern for commercial advantage was chosen as most frequent by respondents, with a score of 1.75, but owners' views, with respondents saying they often lead to self-limitation with a score of 1.76, was a very close second. National interest and political advantage were the next most important. Danger to staff was considered the least important, with a score of 2.11.

The stress upon the importance of economic and political factors in restricting the media was not automatically translated into respondents' views as to the desirability of strengthening various elements in order to help the media play this role. The responses to these questions are summarized in Table 7.

As this shows, the improvement of journalistic standards was seen as being the most important factor in enabling the

Table 7

Importance of strengthening factors to help the media as Fourth Estate

	Very	*Quite*	*Not very*	*Missing*
		Number and percentage		
Legal protection	149 (49.3)	91 (30.1)	44 (14.6)	18 (6.0)
Political independence	137 (45.4)	79 (26.2)	64 (21.2)	22 (7.3)
Financial independence	174 (57.6)	90 (29.8)	20 (6.6)	18 (6.0)
Journalistic standards	195 (64.6)	75 (24.8)	15 (5.0)	17 (5.6)
Protection of sources	131 (43.3)	114 (37.7)	34 (11.3)	23 (7.6)

N = 302

media better to play this role. The mean score for this element was 1.37, while the next most popular was financial independence at 1.46. Perhaps surprisingly, given the extent to which the discharge of the function is seen to be implicated in matters of the state and political life, the need to increase the political independence of the media was seen as the least important, at a mean of 1.74, of the factors that should be increased. Legal protection, too, rated surprisingly poorly given that considerations of state secrecy and political pressure were rated most highly as objective obstacles and views of the national interest and political pressure were prominent subjective factors impeding this function.

Finally, irrespective of their views on what the nature and importance of the Fourth Estate function in their society actually was, respondents were overwhelmingly of the view that the media ought to play this critical and supervisory role. As many as 263 respondents (87.1 per cent) answered affirmatively, while only 6 (2.0 per cent) answered negatively, 4 (1.3 per cent) did not know and 29 (9.6 per cent) did not answer the question.[18]

The Fourth Estate functions of the media are thus viewed internationally as important and increasing, and most journalism educators hold the view that these functions should be present. They see the major dangers as coming from politicians and owners and think that the strengthening of journalistic standards is the most important factor in improving the performance of these functions.

How is the Fourth Estate function taught?

The great majority of journalism educators responding to our Questionnaire were of the view that teaching about the media should include this function. Of the total number of replies, 290 (96 per cent) were in favour, 3 were against (1.0 per cent), 4 (1.3 per cent) did not know and 5 (1.7 per cent) gave no answer. Of those thinking that the mass media should play the role of Fourth Estate, 97.3 per cent also thought that this should be included in the education offered by their course. In only 9 cases (3.0 per cent) did respondents say that it was not actually included in their own school's teaching, although 10 further respondents (3.3 per cent) did not answer the question. In those few cases in which it was not taught at all, lack of resources was the most frequently identified reason, with a mean of 1.67. External pressures, either in general or from 'the Authorities' were rated as relatively unimportant, both having a mean of 2.7 — the same as for resistance from students.

In that vast majority of cases in which these functions were in fact taught, the practice was to make it an integral part of the overall teaching. In only 37 cases (12.3 per cent) was there a separate course devoted to this topic. It was most frequently taught as part of another course (139 cases, or 46 per cent), or as a part of all courses (107 cases, or 35.4 per cent). Again, in the majority of cases, 205 or 67.9 per cent, all students were obliged to study this topic. In 46 cases (15.2 per cent) they were not, and in 51 cases (16.9) there was no reply to this question.[19] The evidence suggests that teaching these functions as a separate course is perceived as the most satisfactory way of teaching the material, followed by the subject being part of another course. Of those who taught it as a separate course, 21.6 described their own course as carrying out this function very well and of those who taught it as part of another course, 18.0 per cent saw it as being done very well. In both of those cases, fewer than twelve per cent were dissatisfied with their performance, whereas in the case of those responding that it was taught as part of all courses, 25.2 per cent thought their institution taught it moderately poorly and 8.4 per cent very poorly.

The types of courses in which the Fourth Estate functions were integrated are summarized in Table 8. As this shows, the teaching is spread out over a wide range of different subjects, both theoretical and practical, but there is, if anything, a tendency for the teaching to be concentrated in the more practical areas rather than the more theoretical ones.

Table 8

Fourth Estate functions appearing in other courses

Course	*Frequencies*
Reporting	185
Editing	127
Law	164
Political and Social Science	84
Media History	154
Media Ethics	161
Media or Communication Systems	148
General Studies	44

N = 255

This tendency emerges more strongly when we consider the results of the question asking what the content of the material taught under this heading actually covered. The material is summarized in Table 9 and while it shows a stress upon practical realities as opposed to abstract concepts, it is also the case that comparative work, considering the historical or international aspects of the question, is relatively underdeveloped.

TABLE 9

WHAT TEACHING THIS ROLE OF THE MEDIA IS CONCERNED WITH

Topic	*Frequency*
History of the concept	164
Theoretical role of the concept	201
History of the practical reality	169
Actual practice in your society	257
Actual practice in other societies	126
Personal qualities needed to realize the concept	112
N = 257	

It proved rather difficult to get any estimates either of the amount of time devoted to this function or of the proportion of teaching. Various formulations were attempted both in design and testing, without any satisfactory solution emerging. We finally settled on a question that invited an estimate either of the number of hours or of the per cent of total teaching, but we anticipated that there would be a poor response in this instance. We were, unfortunately, proved right. Only 54 respondents were able to give an estimate of the number of hours spent. The estimates ranged from one hour to 600 hours and with this range of responses spread over a small number of cases we believe that mean figures would be slightly misleading. Of the responses, 42.6 per cent were for 10 hours or less, and ten hours was the most frequently chosen figure. At a frequency of ten, it was chosen at least 3 times more than any other. Of the estimates, 75.9 per cent fell at or below 75 hours and 81.5 per cent at 100 hours or less. Rather more respondents were able to give an estimate of the percentage of teaching time devoted to this. There were 155 responses ranging between 1 per cent and 90 per cent. Nearly one quarter of the reports are for estimated values of less than ten per cent and more than half for less than fifteen. More than seventy per cent of estimates are for less than thirty per cent. While we would not wish to press this conclusion too firmly on the basis of the relatively narrow range of responses we have been able to gather, we would suggest that, whatever view of the importance of these functions is held by senior figures in Schools of Journalism, they do not, when measured by these individuals' own quantitative estimates, play a very substantial role in the curriculum.

The majority of respondents were either moderately well satisfied with their course's performance in equipping students for this aspect of the media (185 responses, or 61.3 per cent) or very well satisfied (42 responses, or 13.9 per cent). Forty-seven respondents (15.6 per cent) thought their course carried out this task poorly, but only 11 (3.6 per cent) felt it performed very poorly. Despite this high level of satisfaction, we found little evidence of complacency. A hundred and sixty-five respondents (54.6 per cent) thought that the emphasis given to this teaching should be increased and 110 (36.4 per cent) felt that it should remain the same. Only 3 respondents (1.0 per cent) felt that the amount should be reduced. When asked to indicate the relative importance of different factors in preventing the changes they thought desirable, the responses were as summarized in Table 10. As is evident, lack of resources was identified as the most important reason for lack of change. This matches quite closely with the views of those who thought that such teaching had no place on their course, and those who reported that there was no such teaching on their course. In all three instances, resources were identified as the most important issue. It is also notable that in relatively few cases was it thought that attitudes and shortcomings of staff and students were an obstacle to change.

As might be expected, the majority (59.5 per cent) of those who thought their course did very well in teaching this area saw no need to change the emphasis of the teaching, although *all* of the remainder thought that it should be increased. In the cases of those who thought their course performed fairly well and not very well, the majority, 55.1 per cent and 76.6 per cent respectively, were in favour of increasing the amount of teaching. Then again, 72.7 per cent of those who thought their course did this work badly felt that the emphasis of the teaching should be shifted. It would seem, then, that as the perception of the inadequacy of a course increases, so the likelihood of expressing a desire to improve it rises also.

Overall, we found that teaching this topic was dispersed

TABLE 10

IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS PREVENTING CHANGES OF EMPHASIS

	Very	*Important*	*Not very*	*Missing*
		Number and percentage		
Resistance from other staff	20 (6.6)	33 (10.9)	82 (27.2)	167 (55.3)
Lack of staff ability to change	29 (9.6)	46 (15.2)	65 (21.5)	162 (53.6)
Resistance from students	7 (2.3)	33 (10.9)	93 (30.8)	169 (56.0)
Resistance from outside	17 (5.6)	27 (8.9)	89 (29.5)	169 (56.0)
Lack of resources	74 (24.5)	47 (15.6)	29 (9.6)	152 (50.3)
N = 302				

throughout the general teaching effort of Schools of Journalism, even though this was not seen as the most satisfactory method. The amount of time spent on teaching was relatively low, in percentage terms, but there was general satisfaction with the results of this work. The major reason for not improving the quality of the teaching was that there were inadequate resources, but these were not conceived of in terms of the inadequacy of members of staff. There was a general desire to improve teaching or at least maintain the level of work, and the need for improvement was particularly felt by those who believed that their current offerings were inadequate.

National specificities

In this section we attempt some direct comparisons between countries in those instances for which there seems to us to be sufficient data, since we would expect to find differences between the very different national situations subsumed under our overall picture. We will consider aspects of national cases with references both to the overall picture presented above and in comparison with some other selected cases in an attempt to demonstrate the different patterns of responses. In these international comparisons it is, in our view, more important to consider the relative, rather than absolute, values of the responses since we cannot be sure that different national instances have used the same absolute scale in their responses. We will concentrate our attention on those countries for which we have a fair range of respondents, but occasionally illustrate our points with supplementary references to less well-represented countries. Since we are concerned with patterns of relative importance, rather than absolute values, we have chosen to emphasize this by utilizing graphical representations rather than tables of figures.

Some features of the global picture are reproduced in almost all national cases. The most striking of these instances of homogeneity is what we may term the 'optimistic' interpretation of the role of the media as Fourth Estate. Irrespective of the actual importance ascribed to these functions, we have a record of respondents' views as to whether the importance of this function is increasing or otherwise. Overall, the views of respondents as to the direction of movement in this field are as in Figure 1. Only a small proportion of respondents believe that this function is being weakened, and they are far outnumbered by those with the positive view that the importance of the media as Fourth Estate is increasing or has at least retained the same level.

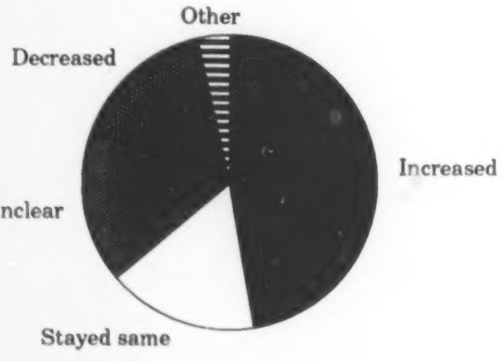

Fig. 1. Opinions of changes in importance of Fourth Estate in the last decade (all respondents).

The countries that stand out as marked exceptions to this view in that the majority do not believe either that the role is increasing or that it has remained the same are: Algeria, in which the one respondent takes the view that the media have never played this role; Canada, in which two opinions are divided equally and one undecided; Costa Rica, Indonesia and Thailand, in which the one respondent in each case is undecided; Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain in which opinion is divided or unclear; Jamaica, the Lebanon, the United Kingdom and Venezuela in which the largest groups hold that there has been a decline. The United Kingdom is an example from which we have a number of responses and it is interesting to compare it with some other national instances for which we have a fair range. The results are summarized in Figures 2 to 5. The United Kingdom is clearly quite different from the United States, with which it is often associated in discussions of journalism and related matters but in which the respondents display what we may call a guarded optimism. West Germany, with which the United Kingdom shares a common European framework, is rather closer to the overall average in its respondents' views. In the case of the People's Republic of China, we need to bear in mind that there have been some major political changes since the data in this survey were collected, but the respondents were remarkably optimistic as to the progress of the media when the survey was taken in Spring 1989. Different systems of press ownership and control in different countries may, of course, influence the actual extent to which the Fourth Estate function is exercised, but on the evidence before us these factors do not seem to determine whether the function is perceived as increasing or otherwise. It therefore seems likely that there is nothing in-built into the pattern either of general social and economic relations that exist in the United Kingdom nor in that media system itself that leads to this extraordinary pessimism. It is perhaps more the product of particular political and economic forces acting in this instance that lead to the anomalous international position.[20]

On the other hand, the common optimism about the future of the Fourth Estate functions of the press obviously refers to rather different social realities in different countries. The increase in the exercise of Fourth Estate functions in Country A could in fact mean something quite different to a similar increase in Country B, since the two sets of respondents may not share the same definitions of the Fourth Estate functions. If we compare respondents' views of which sections of society attract the greatest degree of attention from the media in their Fourth Estate role, we find that there are wide differences between, say, the United States and the People's Republic of China. The responses of these countries and the global picture, including these countries, are detailed in Figure 6. The overall view of the nature of the

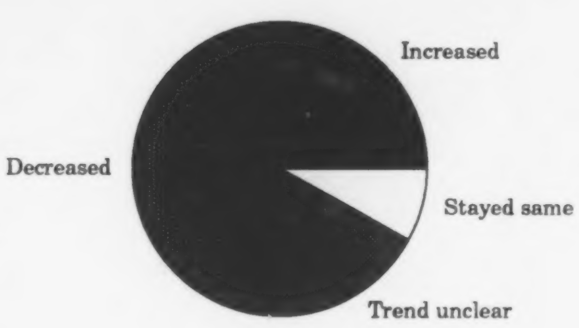

Fig. 2. Opinions of changes in importance of Fourth Estate in the last decade (United Kingdom).

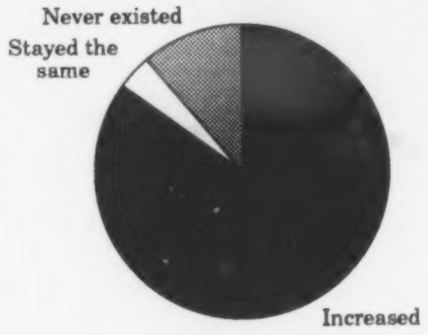

Fig. 3. Opinions of changes in importance of Fourth Estate in the last decade (People's Republic of China).

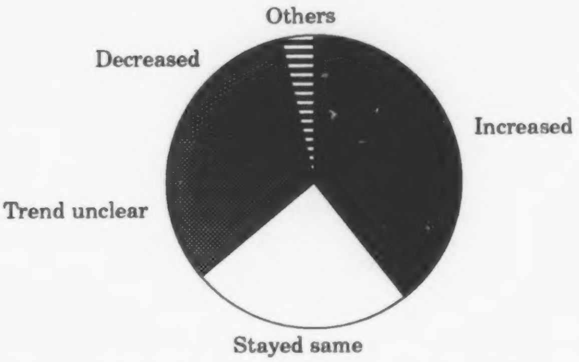

Fig. 4. Opinions of changes in importance of Fourth Estate in the last decade (United States of America).

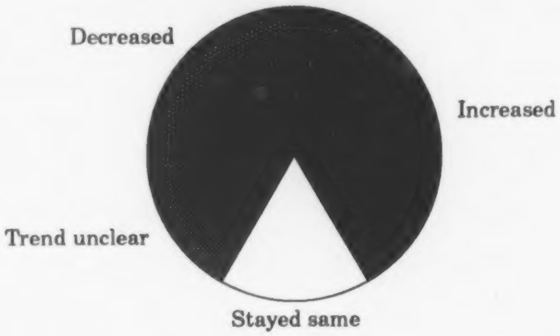

Fig. 5. Opinions of changes in importance of Fourth Estate in the last decade (Federal Republic of Germany (1989)).

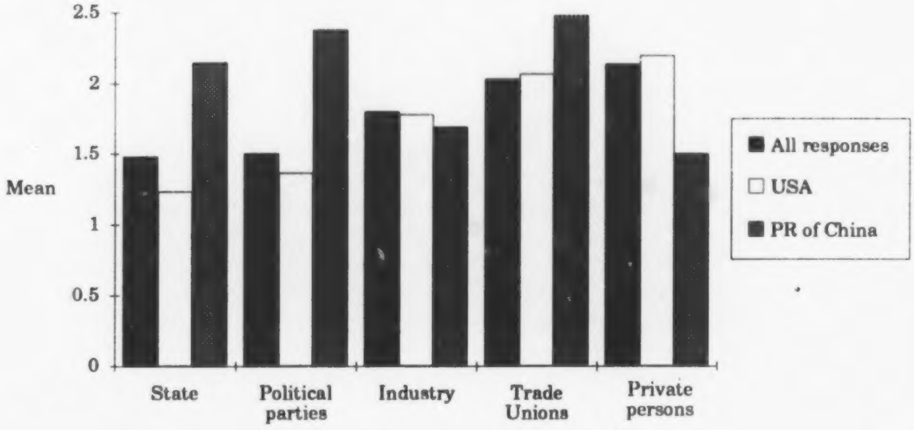

Fig. 6. Sections of society attracting most attention from the media as Fourth Estate.

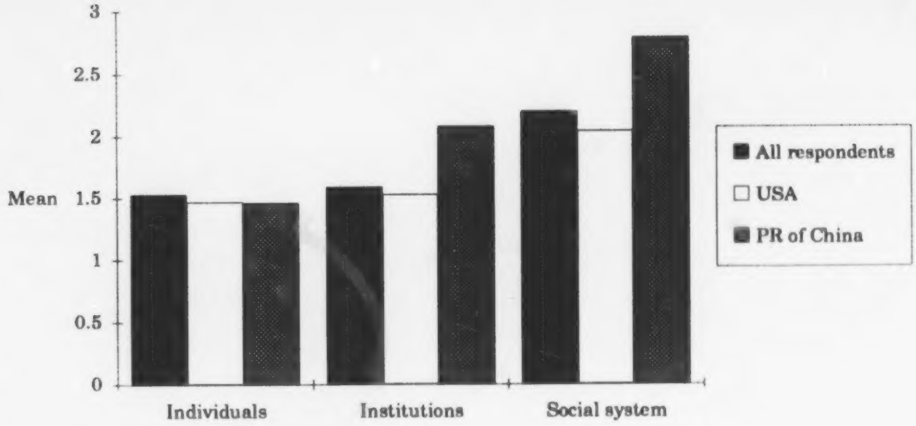

Fig. 7 Levels of society to which responsibility for failures is attributed.

Fourth Estate function is, as we argued above, a 'classical' one in that it emphasizes attention to the state structure (Function 1 in the figure) as its main focus and pays relatively little attention to the activities of individuals (Function 5). This is reproduced quite closely in the case of the United States, but in China a different pattern is revealed. In this case, the state, political parties and trade unions (Function 4) command relatively little attention, and individuals and industry (Function 3) have the lowest means and so are estimated to attract the greatest degree of attention.

While these two examples are perhaps the clearest cases of different conceptions, China is not alone in deviating from this international norm, although its tendency to stress individual activities rather than larger social formations is unique amongst those systems for which we have a range of responses.[21] In a number of the major instances, with different social systems, the United Kingdom and Australia for instance, but also in other cases like West Germany, Korea and Japan, we have different pictures. In these cases, while there are differences over the type of institution that attracts the most attention, the state structure is regarded as relatively inviolable and the subjects of criticism are 'partial' interest groups. It is therefore not possible to argue that the dominant international interpretation of the nature of the media as Fourth Estate is shared by all of the national cases. Indeed, given the weight of responses from the United States in our sample, it seems possible that this classical formula of the Fourth Estate is particularly prevalent there and, perhaps, in the countries most heavily influenced by its conceptions of journalism. More common, internationally, would seem to be a conception that regards the founding institutions of society as relatively immune to attention but sees political parties as forces meriting frequent attention.

This would suggest that the conception of the Fourth Estate that is common in these countries, and certainly which informs journalism educators, is a more or less consciously self-limiting one. In a manner familiar from the history of political thought, the state structure is held to be the universal representative of social life, and those forces that have often been termed 'civil society' are seen as lacking this universal value and thus subject to critical scrutiny. They are subject to the attention of media precisely because they represent only 'partial' interests which may be opposed to the public good as articulated by the state as its alleged repository. The model revealed most clearly by the United States seems to suggest a more 'anarchic' conception. There is no evident standard of universality by which the claims of partial groups may be judged. This could suggest that it stands closer to an 'ideal' image of the Fourth Estate as the self-regulating source of critical values, in which the media are conceived of as political and social actors in their own right. Certainly, this would be consistent with the tendency which we noted above for the Fourth Estate role to be conceived of in terms of the activities of the larger and more professionalized parts of the media system.[22]

This interpretation is supported by the fact that there is not an identical systematic division when we come to consider the types of failings that are the subjects of the bulk of media attention. As Figure 7 shows, there are indeed differences of emphasis between the United States and China. In the latter case, there is a much stronger relative tendency to attribute the failings and shortcomings of society to individuals and corresponding reluctance to blame the social system. In both of these systems as well as in Australia, Brazil, Mexico and the United Kingdom, the same general trend of allocating responsibility primarily to individuals, then to institutions, and lastly, to the social system itself, is observable.

This 'personalization' is not repeated everywhere. In cases as diverse as Malaysia and West Germany, a different pattern emerges. Here it is the institutional level that is judged to attract the most attention as the level at which responsibility for social ills is located by the media. This in fact seems a more uniform international pattern, with the media limiting their criticism of both individuals and the social system in, for example, Japan, Korea and Nigeria.

What appears to emerge from these two sets of responses is a notion of the mass media as limited critics of their own societies. Those national cases that seem to represent the most extensive range of criticism in fact turn out to have a dominant focus on individual failings rather than systemic factors. The other major model, while regarding the state as

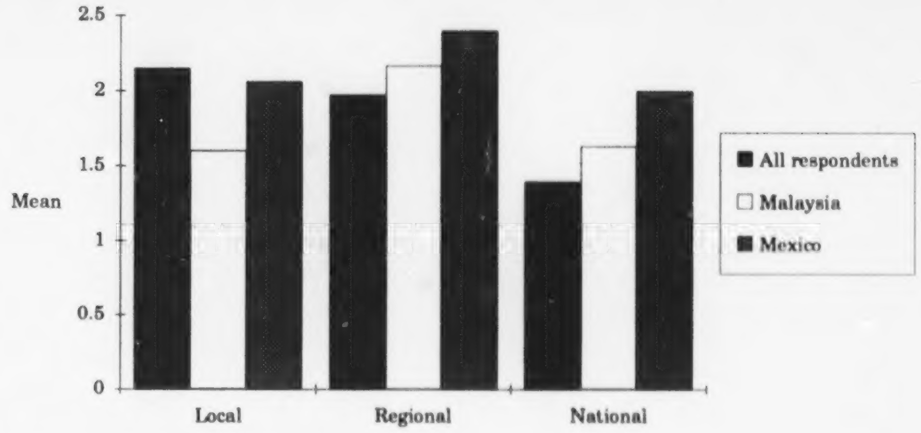

Fig. 8. Levels of media most engaged with Fourth Estate fonctions.

relatively sacrosanct, tends to be more willing to locate problems at the institutional level. In none of the national cases is high critical attention to the state combined with a willingness to attribute failures to the system as a whole. The 'radicalism' of the Fourth Estate function of the media thus seems fairly well circumscribed within the existing social order. The media are everywhere habitually critics of aspects of society rather than critics of society.

This is not too surprising when we consider that the overall evidence is that the national media, and, within that, broadcasting and the daily press, tend to be considered as the major sites of the Fourth Estate function. Since these will in general of necessity be fairly large-scale organizations closely linked to the prevailing sources of social power in different social and economic systems, it would require quite an unusual set of factors to make such media systematic social critics. In fact, as Figure 8 shows, the pattern of the dominance of national media in this function is quite marked. Only in Malaysia and Mexico do we find a small departure from this pattern, where the local media are rated quite highly as bearers of this function. It is probably the case that the very fact that the national media are large-scale undertakings relative to the local or regional media both circumscribes the range of the critique of society as a whole and allows them to act sufficiently independently of partial interest groups in undertaking their critical and supervisory activities.

In every national instance for which we have a number of responses, the information function of the mass media was rated most highly, but there were four different overall patterns. Only in one of these, represented by Korea and the United Kingdom, was the Fourth Estate function rated highly enough to warrant second place. The dominant pattern, involving the People's Republic of China, the United States, Mexico and Malaysia, corresponded to the overall international picture, in which the Fourth Estate functions are placed third after information and education. In the third variant including Japan and West Germany, information and entertainment were the two most highly ranked functions. The exceptional cases were Nigeria, in which information and mobilization were the two most important functions, and Brazil, in which education and entertainment were both equally rated in second place. These results tend to modify the otherwise optimistic picture of the status of the Fourth Estate functions held by journalism educators which might be derived from their general optimism about the direction of change. Neither 'education', which suggests the superiority of the journalist to the audience, nor 'entertainment', which suggests a distractive function for the media, sit particularly comfortably with the notion of the media as engaged in systematic criticism and investigation of social ills.

The tendency is towards a unity, or a limited number of options, in estimates of the activities of the media, but there is a considerably wider range of methods and views as to the activities of the schools themselves. These differences do not seem to have much influence on the high levels of self-satisfaction reported by the teachers. The overall picture is of a belief that the Fourth Estate functions are taught either very well or moderately well and the only such case for which we have a range of responses is the People's Republic of China, in which the largest category is 'moderately well' and the second largest 'moderately poorly'.

The final factor upon which there is considerable uniformity is amongst those who wish to change the amount of teaching. The major reason they give for it in all but three major cases is 'lack of resources'. Exceptions are Brazil, which is similar in this respect to Malaysia, in which staff inability is rated highly, and Mexico, which is the only case in which outside pressures are rated highest.

National peculiarities

The existence of these national differences within the overall picture suggest that there may be groupings of countries that share common features. We were interested to discover whether we could find cross-national patterns. In attempting to answer this question we used a number of multivariate approaches based on principal component analysis, with limited success.[23] Differences in results from different approaches suggested that there was no 'obvious' differentia-

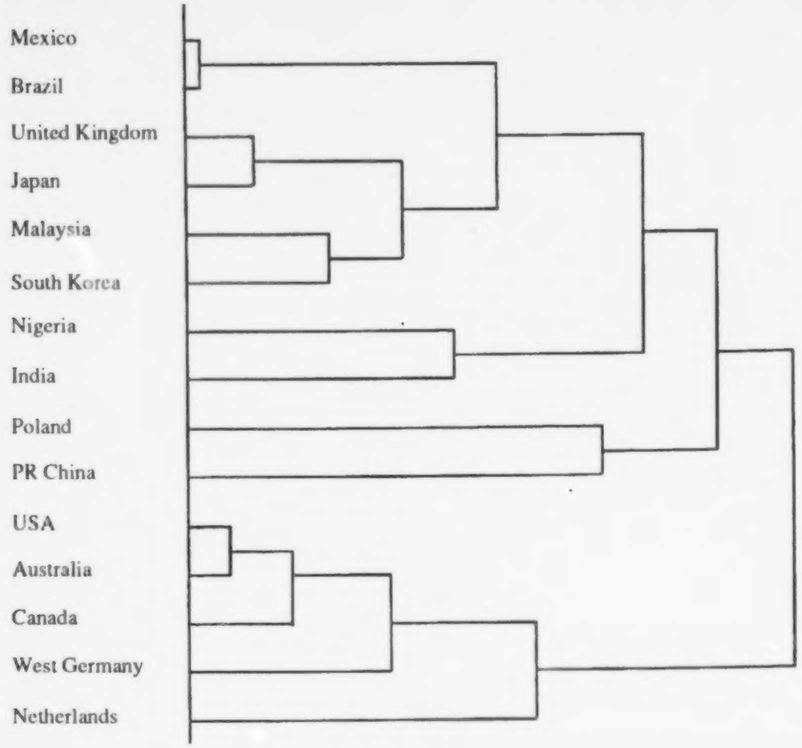

Fig. 9. Clustering of fifteen countries on estimation of the importance of dimensions of the Fourth Estate functions [Hierarchical clustering with Ward method. Euclidean distance].

tion, but one group of developed Western countries was constant. Whatever approach was used, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States and West Germany were always clustered in the same group. Another specific case was that represented by the respondents from the People's Republic of China, joined by respondents from Poland. The remaining countries (India, Japan, Malaysia, Nigeria, South Korea and United Kingdom) either joined one of these two clusters or produced specific clusters. In all the analyses, two groups of two countries — Brazil and Mexico, Japan and the UK — appeared as the pairs of most similar countries. When other countries were added to the analysis, only Brazil and Mexico remained a stable pair. One clear version of the clusters derived is shown in Figure 9.

The fundamental differences in the conception of the Fourth Estate functions of the media appear very clearly in Table 11. On the majority of the variables defining the conceptions of the press, lies the cluster of Latin American and Asian countries between the 'Western' group and China/Poland, joined by Nigeria and the United Kingdom. The most extreme differences are worth noting. The 'Western' conception has a low estimate of the importance of the mobilization and organization functions and stresses the role of entertainment. Respondents from China and Poland hold the opposite views of these functions. In the Western countries, critical activities are held to have remained the same for the last ten years, while in China and Poland they are estimated to have considerably increased. Political parties and state structures attract the greatest attention in the Western group, while in the opposite group they receive the least attention. Political pressures on the media are considered one of the least important obstacles to the exercise of the Fourth Estate functions in the Western group, while it is by far the most important in China and Poland. Commercial advantage is the most important 'subjective factor' limiting these functions in the Western group, while political advantage is the most important in China and Poland. All forms of protection of the media in the exercise of this function are seen as more important in the latter group than in the Western one.

The third group is less sharply defined. Media professionals are seen as the most important initiators of the Fourth Estate functions.[24] In this group of countries, pressures from the owners are considered as the most important objective obstacle to the critical role of the media, and views of owners as the most important subjective one. This group attaches great importance to financial independence and journalistic standards in enabling the media to play this role better.

Conclusion

In terms of the questions that we addressed at the start of this paper, we can say that, overall, the Fourth Estate function of the media is estimated by our respondents to exist in most of the countries under consideration, and indeed is widely held to be increasing in importance. The dominant understanding of the term approximates very closely to the 'classical' model in which attention is directed at the national state

TABLE 11

DIFFERENCES IN EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS OF THE FOURTH ESTATE CONCEPTION OF THE MEDIA BETWEEN THE THREE GROUPS OF COUNTRIES

(ARITHMETIC MEANS ON A THREE-POINT SCALE RANGING FROM 1 – VERY IMPORTANT, TO 3 – NOT VERY IMPORTANT)

	Western countries	PR China Poland	Other	Total
Media functions				
Information	1.04	1.20	1.16	1.10
Education	1.84	1.63	1.54	1.65
Entertainment	1.45	2.25	1.74	1.71
Mobilisation	2.35	1.71	1.92	2.04
Critical/supervisory	1.46	1.59	1.54	1.52
Change				
Of Fourth Estate function	2.66	1.24	2.02	2.13
Initiators of critical activities				
Powerful sources	1.78	1.83	1.61	1.70
Media professionals	1.51	1.51	1.90	1.71
General public	2.45	1.90	2.13	2.14
Media concentration on				
National state	1.46	1.91	1.69	1.64
Political parties	1.20	2.40	1.37	1.44
Industry	1.93	1.34	1.82	1.79
Trade Unions	1.72	1.99	1.95	1.88
Private individuals	2.08	1.75	2.15	2.08
Individual people	1.58	1.23	1.77	1.64
Institutions	1.45	2.04	1.47	1.54
Social system	2.12	2.73	2.12	2.20
Media level				
Local media	2.36	1.98	2.08	2.16
Regional media	1.90	1.80	2.15	2.02
National media	1.26	1.37	1.52	1.41
Obstacles to the media				
State secrecy	1.85	1.11	1.54	1.58
Political pressure	2.02	1.48	1.36	1.55
Legal restrictions	2.01	1.92	1.91	1.95
Pressures from owners	2.19	2.64	1.40	1.83
Economic constraints	1.84	2.28	1.91	1.94
Journalistic inadequacies	1.84	2.57	2.09	2.07
Public apathy	2.29	2.45	2.22	2.27
National interest	2.13	1.60	1.56	1.76
Personal privacy	2.08	1.96	1.88	1.96
Danger to staff	2.43	2.08	2.01	2.16
Political advantage	2.20	1.46	1.70	1.83
Owner's views	2.02	2.52	1.40	1.75
Commercial advantage	1.95	2.60	1.60	1.85
Prerequisites				
Legal protection	1.83	1.22	1.41	1.52
Political independence	1.86	1.18	1.35	1.50
Financial independence	1.59	1.38	1.24	1.37
Journalistic standards	1.32	1.49	1.21	1.29
Protection of sources	1.79	1.47	1.46	1.57

structure and political parties. This is one of the key areas in which a differentiation between groups of countries appears. The classical model is most clearly defined in a 'Western' group of countries and is least present in China and Poland. Overwhelmingly, Schools of Journalism teach this topic and most of them are fairly satisfied with their performance. Least satisfaction is recorded in China and Poland; this group also contains the highest proportion of those wishing to increase the amount of teaching devoted to this topic. Lack of resources is seen as the greatest problem preventing an increase in emphasis.

More general conclusions are difficult to draw, partly because dramatic political changes have probably gone some way to rendering the obvious and elegant opposition between our two polar groups obsolete. One area for which our results might still have some importance, however, concerns the nature of the 'Western' grouping. It should be noted that this does not contain two large and important 'Western' countries — Japan and the United Kingdom. As we have seen with regard to one important estimate, the United Kingdom at least is distinctive in having a very strong body of opinion that holds that the importance of this function has decreased over the last decade up to 1989. This suggests that neither the form of ownership, which has not changed significantly, nor formal political structure, which remains constant, are decisive in explaining opinion about changes in the Fourth Estate functions. Instead of the grand schemes that have tended to dominate thinking about media functions during the late and very unlamented epoch, this result suggests that we need to devise theories and measures that are more sensitive to the social realities that can be masked by constitutional prescriptions as to the role of the media.

Notes

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1. In this context it is worth observing that opinion about the actual state of affairs in a particular country or media system is not the same as opinion about a desirable state of affairs. Thus a recent study concluded that: 'No support was found for the hypothesis that US Editors would be more supportive of freedom of the press than Latin American Editors'. Such a hypothesis would presumably arise from the unthought, but not unreasonable, supposition that in at least some Latin American countries there are greater obstacles to the actual exercise of press freedom than is general in the United States. See M. B. Salwen and B. Garrison, 'Press Freedom and Development: US and Latin American Views' in: *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 66, no. 1, Spring 1989, pp. 87 ff.
2. See D. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, 'A Profile of JMC Educators' in: *Journalism Educator*, vol. 42, no. 2, Summer 1988, pp. 4–41. This data only refers to the United States and, as will become apparent below, the findings of our survey show that this country is not necessarily typical of every national instance.
3. It was thus rendered in the appropriate translations of the research material.
4. After the usage of Erik Gustaf Geijer, who coined the term in a review he penned for the journal *Litteraturbladet*, no. 8 of August 1838. See E. G. Geijer, *Den Svenska Prosan: Erik Gustaf Geijer* (Stockholm, Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1951), p. 324.
5. See C. Sparks, 'The Popular Press and Political Democracy' in: *Media, Culture and Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1988, pp. 209–10.
6. This account obviously has a British bias due to the author's intellectual background. There is an outstanding history of the early nineteenth-century evolution of the term in Britain by Boyce. See his 'The Fourth Estate: re-appraisal of a concept', in: G. E. Boyce, J. Curran and P. Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History* (Constable, 1978). For an alternative, but still European, account of the development, see H. M. Kepplinger, 'The Changing Functions of the Mass Media: A Historical Perspective' in *Gazette*, vol. 44, no. 3, 1989, pp. 177–89.
7. Certainly, one standard history of the American press by Emery and Emery claims that its coverage of the early period has as its 'primary concern ... an exposition of the principles upon which the American "Fourth Estate" was founded' and titles its fourth chapter 'Rise of the Fourth Estate'. See E. Emery and M. Emery, *The Press in America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, Fifth Edition, 1984). Despite the title, the book is mostly concerned with the United States only.
8. Some authors claim that this was in fact true at a later stage. See the claim by J. Curran and J. Seaton that it described the British press most closely in the 1920s in their *Power Without Responsibility* (Routledge, Third Edition, 1988), p. 55.
9. See J. Grant, 'Internal Reporting by Investigative Journalists in China and its Influence on Government Policy' in: *Gazette*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1988, pp. 53–65.
10. Most respondents appear to have accepted this limitation of the language of the survey. Only two, English-speaking, respondents objected to the choice of terminology, but it is of course possible that other possible respondents were influenced by the language to the extent that they did not in fact respond.
11. For the full wording of the covering letter and the text of the questionnaire, see Appendix.
12. The research was originally contracted to be conducted in English, French and Spanish. The two additional language translations were the fortuitous result of the enthusiasm of colleagues at PCL whose native languages are Chinese and Japanese. Copies of the Questionnaire, and of the data used in this report, are available from Colin Sparks at PCL.
13. It had been hoped to include the USSR in the group of countries for which we had detailed responses, but unfortunately communication difficulties made that impossible.
14. Four envelopes were returned as wrongly addressed and two replies were received too late for inclusion.
15. This was in spite of repeated attempts to contact named individuals in those countries. We suspect the vagaries of the international postal services may have been in part responsible for our difficulties.
16. See, for example, P. Schlesinger, *Putting Reality Together* (Constable, Second Edition, 1988).
17. Four thought it had never existed, four did not know and three responses were missing.
18. The relatively large number of missing answers to this question may well have been in part at least the result of a poor form design which made it a little less visible than the other 'prescriptive' question, which is reported upon in the next section.
19. Again, poor design may have contributed to this relatively large figure.
20. In this context, it is worth noting that the International Federation of Journalists recently received a report from a special inquiry into press freedom in the United Kingdom. Although this addressed a rather more general question than the one with which we are here concerned, it concluded that official secrecy and government intervention were responsible for what it saw as a sharp decline in press freedom in recent years. See M. Doornaert and S. E. Omdal, *Press Freedom Under Attack in Britain* (IFJ, Brussels, 1979).
21. It might be worth noting that Poland, for which we have a small number of responses which nevertheless may be taken as complete coverage of journalism education institutions, and which has a social system in many respects similar to that of China, displays a quite different pattern of responses to this question.
22. An alternative explanation suggests itself in that it may well be that the apparent lack of external norms revealed in this answer is more a function of the crudity of the research instrument than the nature of the media. Had this question contained a possible response directly tailored to the prevailing conditions in the United States, for example, the category of inquiry 'The Constitutional Order', a sacred site of values, might have merged in this instance, too.
23. We analyzed 38 variables from Questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16 of the Questionnaire.
24. This finding confirms our earlier finding that a belief in the 'professionalization' of journalism is strongest in the developing world.

Appendix

The Polytechnic of Central London
Faculty of Communication

1 March 1989

Dear Colleague,

Journalism education and the role of the media as Fourth Estate

I have been asked by UNESCO to coordinate an enquiry into the ways in which the idea of the media as a 'Fourth Estate' influences journalism education and I would like to ask your assistance in carrying out this task. I enclose a Questionnaire about your country and your institution and I would be very glad if you could complete and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

In framing this Questionnaire I consulted as widely as possible in order to avoid unconscious bias towards any one definition and, to help you respond, I would like to explain how some terms are used here.

The term 'Fourth Estate' is widely used but seldom precisely defined. In this context it stands for those functions of the media in which they take an independent and critical stand towards some powerful individual or institution. It is intended to include the reporting of actions or plans which could have major effects on the public; the investigation of possible abuses of power, whether political, social or economic; the defence of citizens' rights against actual abuses of power. The term was, historically, first used for the newspaper press but I have here broadened it to include newspaper and magazine press, radio and TV, and used the generic term 'media' for all of these. The term is here intended as a descriptor independent of any normative considerations and to avoid any problems with this I have used the phrase 'critical and supervisory role of the media' in the body of the Questionnaire. I would ask you to frame your replies in the light of the actual functioning of the media today rather than any ideal situation or constitutional formulation.

I trust this will help you complete the Questionnaire. I look forward to your reply and I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Colin Sparks

FOURTH ESTATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Institution ....
2. Country ....
3. Title of Respondent ....
4. Which of the following best describes your institutions?

   University or equivalent ☐
   State-run training school ☐
   Privately-run training school ☐
   Other (please specify) ....

5. How long is your main media or journalism course?

   Up to 12 months ☐ 12–24 months ☐ 25–36 months ☐
   37–48 months ☐ More than 48 months ☐

6. In your opinion, how important are the following functions of the media in your society today?

Function	*Very important*	*Quite important*	*Not very important*
Information	☐	☐	☐
Education	☐	☐	☐
Entertainment	☐	☐	☐
Mobilisation and organisation	☐	☐	☐
Critical and supervisory	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Please specify ....

7. In the last ten years, how have the critical and supervisory activities of the media changed?

Increased	☐	Decreased	☐
Stayed the same	☐	Have never existed	☐
The trend is not clear	☐	Don't know	☐

8. How frequently do any of the following initiate critical and supervisory activities by the media?

	Very often	*Sometimes*	*Not very often*
Powerful sources	☐	☐	☐
Media professionals	☐	☐	☐
The general public	☐	☐	☐
Others	☐	☐	☐

Please specify ....

9. To the best of your knowledge, which sections of society attract the attention of the media in their critical and supervisory role?

	A great deal	*Some*	*Very little*
National state structure	☐	☐	☐
Political parties	☐	☐	☐
Industry	☐	☐	☐
Trade Unions	☐	☐	☐
Private individuals	☐	☐	☐
Others	☐	☐	☐

Please specify ....

10. To the best of your knowledge, do the media, when playing a critical and supervisory role, tend to concentrate upon:

	A great deal	*Sometimes*	*Usually not*
The errors of individual people	☐	☐	☐
Errors and faults of institutions	☐	☐	☐
Failures of the social system	☐	☐	☐

11. Which level of media in your country tend to play the critical and supervisory role?

	Often	*Sometimes*	*Usually not*
Local media	☐	☐	☐
Regional media	☐	☐	☐
National media	☐	☐	☐

12. Which types of media tend to play the critical and supervisory role?

	National	*Regional*	*Local*
TV	☐	☐	☐
Radio	☐	☐	☐
Daily papers	☐	☐	☐
Weekly newspapers	☐	☐	☐
News magazines	☐	☐	☐
'Alternative press'	☐	☐	☐
'Community radio'	☐	☐	☐

Others (please specify) ....

13. In your opinion, what are the objective obstacles to the media playing a critical and supervisory role?

	Very important	*Important*	*Not very important*
State secrecy	☐	☐	☐
Political pressure	☐	☐	☐
Legal restrictions	☐	☐	☐
Pressure from owners	☐	☐	☐
Economic constraints	☐	☐	☐
Journalistic inadequacies	☐	☐	☐
Public apathy	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) ....

14. In your opinion, do any subjective factors lead the media to limit their critical and supervisory role of the own accord?

	Often	*Sometimes*	*Never*
National interest	☐	☐	☐
Personal privacy	☐	☐	☐
Danger to staff	☐	☐	☐
Political advantage	☐	☐	☐
Owners' views	☐	☐	☐
Commercial advantage	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) ....

15. Do you believe that the media ought to play this critical and supervisory role?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

16. In your opinion, which of the following would need to be strengthened to enable the media better to play this role?

	Very important	*Quite important*	*Not very important*
Legal protection	☐	☐	☐
Political independence	☐	☐	☐
Financial independence	☐	☐	☐
Journalistic standards	☐	☐	☐
Protection of sources	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) ....

17. Do you think your institution's education programme should include teaching about this role of the media?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

18. If you think it has no place in your institution's teaching, what are the main reasons?

It is irrelevant to media practice	☐
It is irrelevant to media education	☐
It does not fit into my view of the media	☐
There is not space in the timetable for it	☐

19. Does your institution's education programme include teacing about this function of the media?

As a separate course	☐	As part of another course	☐
As part of all courses	☐	Not at all	☐

If you answer 'Not at all' to Questions 19, answer Question 20 and then turn directly to Question 27 without answering Questions 21 through 26. If you give any other answer to Questions 19, please omit Question 20 and answer from Question 21 on.

20. What are the reasons that this subject is not taught in your institution?

	Very important	*Important*	*Not very important*
Resistance from staff	☐	☐	☐
Lack of staff ability to change	☐	☐	☐
Resistance from students	☐	☐	☐
Resistance from outside	☐	☐	☐
The authorities do not permit it	☐	☐	☐
Lack of resources	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) ....

21. Do all your students have to study the critical and supervisory role of the media?

Yes ☐ No ☐

22. If this role of the media is not taught as a separate course, which courses include some elements of this question?

Reporting ☐
Editing ☐
Law ☐
Political and social science ☐
Media history ☐
Media ethics ☐
Media or communication systems ☐
General studies, etc. ☐
Other (please specify) ....

23. If at all possible, could you please give a rough estimate of the total amount of teaching time devoted to study of this concept?

...........hours and/or ....per cent of all teaching

24. With what is teaching about this role of the media concerned?

History of the concept ☐
Theoretical role of the concept ☐
History of the practical reality ☐
Actual practice in your society ☐
Actual practice in other societies ☐
Personal qualities needed to realise the concept ☐
Other (please specify) ....

25. To the extent that it is possible, do you think that your institution equips its students for the critical and supervisory role of the media?

Very well ☐ Moderately well ☐
Moderately poorly ☐ Very poorly ☐

26. Do you believe the emphasis given to this teaching should be changed?

Increased ☐ Decreased ☐ Should stay the same ☐

27. If you think the emphasis should be changed, which factors do you believe are important in preventing the change?

	Very important	*Important*	*Not very important*
Resistance from other staff	☐	☐	☐
Lack of staff ability to change	☐	☐	☐
Resistance from students	☐	☐	☐
Resistance from outside	☐	☐	☐
Lack of resources	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) ....

28. What kinds of skills and qualities are needed if journalists are to carry out these critical and supervisory functions properly?

	Very important	*Important*	*Not very important*
Knowledge of society	☐	☐	☐
Journalistic skills	☐	☐	☐
Personal courage	☐	☐	☐
Sense of responsibility	☐	☐	☐
Being critically-minded	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify) ....

We would be glad of any further views you have on these subjects and we include another sheet for your use in outlining them.

We thank you for your cooperation and we would remind you that there is a pre-addressed envelope enclosed for you to return the completed Questionnaire.

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